THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

Paper due Dec. 8th

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

BOOKS BY GAMALIEL BRADFORD

LEE THE AMERICAN
CONFEDERATE PORTRAITS
UNION PORTRAITS
PORTRAITS OF WOMEN
PORTRAITS OF AMERICAN WOMEN
A PROPHET OF JOY
AMERICAN PORTRAITS
DAMAGED SOULS
THE SOUL OF SAMUEL PEPYS
A NATURALIST OF SOULS
DARWIN
LIFE AND I
AS GOD MADE THEM
DAUGHTERS OF EVE
THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

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PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT IN THE WHITE HOUSE

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

BY

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

M. A. DE WOLFE HOWE

WHOSE SKILL IN BIOGRAPHY

IS EQUALED BY

HIS GENIUS FOR FRIENDSHIP

'L'étude de la nature humaine est infinie: au moment où l'on croit la tenir et se pouvoir reposer un peu, elle échappe, et c'est à recommencer.' — SAINTE-BEUVE.

PREFACE

After writing several scores of portraits of men and women long since comfortably dead and buried, I have attempted in this volume to deal with some still living or so recently dead that they seem alive to millions who remember them. Besides the obvious drawback that living persons may do something to-morrow that will throw your study quite out of joint, there are more subtle difficulties as to material. There is no lack of quantity here. On the contrary, with subjects such as Roosevelt and Wilson there are sources enough to require years of investigation. But the material is not of the most satisfactory order. A large part of it consists of reported utterances, and while such utterances are often alluringly significant, they are deplorably unreliable. Furthermore, with persons living or so lately dead, the cloud of partisan prejudice is so enveloping and confusing that it is more difficult than usual to find one's way in it to sane and fairly balanced conclusions. If the psychographer had not become hardened to the feeling that no conclusion about human character is ever final, he would have given up a hundred times in despair.

Also, an alleged weakness of the psychographic method is perhaps more obvious in this volume than in some others. It is a marked feature of that method that it lays stress upon essential elements

of character rather than upon the shift and variety of circumstance. Now the essential elements of character are widely and commonly human, but when you deal with a diversified group, when you turn from a temperance reformer to an opera dancer, from a preacher to a thief, the cloud of piquant variation somewhat relieves the emphasis on the fundamentals beneath. In this volume all the subjects are men of practical affairs, of vigorous and constant action. Therefore the same elements — ambition, the intense concern with this world to the exclusion of another, the astonishing readiness to accept responsibility and make critical decisions, the passion for dealing with men and the methods of controlling them — reappear with what some may feel to be a monotonous iteration. I can only say that it is of the most curious interest to me to observe and study the way in which these different elements are modified and developed by the working of circumstances and the ingrained strength and weakness of each particular character. After all, there is not a single element that is not present to some extent in you and me, and it is endlessly delightful to consider why they have not put you and me where they put Roosevelt and Mussolini. Something of the charm of these speculations I have endeavored to communicate to my readers.

I am indebted to many persons for assistance of one sort or another, especially to my wife and to Miss Harriet E. Crouch for help in ferreting out

material from obscure magazines and newspapers. But perhaps the greatest element of assistance, not only in this book but in all my intellectual life, has been the Boston Athenæum Library, which may indeed be said to have played a conspicuous part in the intellectual life of America for over a hundred years. Nearly every name prominent in the literary annals of New England has been more or less associated with the Athenæum. Longfellow, Lowell, Hawthorne, the Jameses, Howells, were at least familiar with it. Emerson, Holmes, Parkman, not to mention more recent authors, did some of their reading and thinking in these restful alcoves. Other libraries may be better stocked and more elaborately equipped. It is safe to say that none anywhere has more an atmosphere of its own, that none is more conducive to intellectual aspiration and spiritual peace. For myself, I have worked in the Athenæum for fifty years and I hope to work there as long as I am capable of working anywhere away from home. I can never adequately express my debt, not only to all those who have so efficiently and courteously managed the Library, but to the august and at the same time warmly human influence of the Institution itself.

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

WELLESLEY HILLS, MASSACHUSETTS

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THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

I

THE FURY OF LIVING
THEODORE ROOSEVELT

CHRONOLOGY

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Born, New York, October 27, 1858.
Graduated from Harvard, 1880.
Married Alice Lee, October 27, 1880.
Member New York Legislature, 1881.
Member National Republican Convention, 1884.
In West, 1884–1886.
Married Edith Carow, December 2, 1886.
Civil Service Commissioner, 1889.
New York Police Commissioner, 1895.
Assistant Secretary of the Navy, 1897.
Campaigning in Cuba, 1898.
Governor of New York, 1898.
Vice-President, 1900.
President, September 14, 1901–1909.
In Africa, 1909.
Campaign against Taft and Wilson, 1912.
In Brazil, 1913.
Died, Oyster Bay, January 6, 1919.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD

I

THE FURY OF LIVING
THEODORE ROOSEVELT

I

FROM birth till death he lived in a storm. Action, movement, the vivid, restless, emphatic assertion of the ego, these things meant life to him, they were the evidence of life, and he was uneasy and dissatisfied if any moment passed that was not filled with them. Life was written all over the compact, vigorous figure and the intense, expressive, earnest, determined, sometimes grim and more often cordial countenance. Every movement, every gesture, every attitude of the man was instinct with life.

Theodore Roosevelt was born in New York in 1858, with everything possible in the way of social antecedence. He graduated from Harvard, tried law and found it dull, and early determined to devote himself to politics, with the desire to do his full duty as a citizen and also to get all the fun possible out of the great game of life. When his young wife died, after a year of marriage, leaving him a little daughter, he turned for a time to the roughest ranching in the West. But New York and politics soon called him back and he married Edith Carow. He was Civil Service Commissioner, then

Police Commissioner, then Assistant Secretary of the Navy. He organized and commanded the Rough Rider Regiment in Cuba in 1898. He became Governor of New York. In 1900, he was elected Vice-President and in the next year he succeeded McKinley as President, to be reëlected in 1904. In 1909, he gave way to Taft and betook himself to Africa to collect lions and to Europe to collect kings. In 1912, he allowed himself to become the presidential candidate of the Progressives, thus disastrously splitting the Republican Party and opening the way for Wilson, when if Roosevelt could have loyally supported Taft he would obviously have had the best possible chance for the Presidency in 1916. As it was, in that year he campaigned for Hughes and all through the War he energetically and bitterly fought what he considered to be the *laissez-faire* and pacifist policy of Wilson, strenuously advocating, as he had always done, a course of military preparation and aggressive action on the part of the United States. If he had retained his health and physical vigor, he would probably have been nominated and elected in 1920, instead of Harding, but he died at the comparatively early age of sixty, in January, 1919.

Roosevelt had every inducement to live a life of self-indulgent ease. Like so many young men in his position, he might have sought a little business, a little sport, a little dissipation, and slipped into forgetfulness, with the crowd about him. He had the further excuse for doing this that as a child he

was far from physically robust, though he had no organic defect. It would have been easy for the plea of physical weakness to develop into actual inability, as it does in so many cases. But Roosevelt had no taste whatever for such a course. On the contrary, in the weakened body he had a fierce, magnificent will, which was to carry him through life in whatever direction he desired, no matter what bodily drawbacks might interfere. He wrote to one of his sons: 'I always believe in going hard at everything, whether it is Latin or mathematics, boxing or football.' [1] He went at life hard and made it yield whatever he asked of it. When his father warned him in his childhood that his delicacy of physique would betray him, if he did not discipline himself, he answered, through the set teeth, 'I'll make my body,' and he made it one of the most superb instruments that a human will could have. I wonder if other frail and wretched bodies could have been treated in the same way if they had been taken in time.

There is courage. One who is not over-provided with that useful quality can but marvel at the discipline which this man gave himself successfully. It appears that some are born brave. Roosevelt insists that he was not: 'There were all kinds of things of which I was afraid at first... but by acting as if I was not afraid I gradually ceased to be afraid. Most men can have the same experience if they choose. They will first learn to bear themselves well in trials which they anticipate and which they

school themselves in advance to meet. After a while the habit will grow on them, and they will behave well in sudden and unexpected emergencies which come upon them unawares.'[2] I wonder, I really wonder.

And he trained himself in rough living, slept hard and sparely, ate coarse food, though he liked better when it was to be come by, cheerfully faced privation and discomfort, partly to attain his immediate objects, and still more in Spartan preparation for possibly more difficult and still more difficult objects, to be kept before him until the end. The coward, the weakling, the slacker, were creatures he despised. He saw them about him everywhere, especially in the class he came from, and he was determined not to be one himself.

One asks how much there was in all this of fixed, far-reaching, far-seeing ambition, how much did he dream of a great destiny and aim to fulfil it. It is likely that in his youth he thought of being a great author, a great statesman, a great soldier. He is said to have admitted that 'when he was Civil Service Commissioner his heart would beat a little faster as he walked by the White House and thought that possibly — with emphasis on the "possibly" — he would some day occupy it as President.'[3] Still more striking is his reply when in the early days some one objected that politics was too vulgar a business for one of his class and education: 'I answered that if this were so it merely meant that the people I knew did not belong to the

governing class, and the other people did — and that I intended to be one of the governing class.' [4]

Yet, with the singular power of reflection which always tempered his impetuosity, he early and persistently saw that a man injures his usefulness in the present if he is thinking too much about his future, and he determined to do the best he could in each position, without regard to the consequences, political or other. Above all, what he wanted was to act, to be useful, to make life mean something and get somewhere. He may not always have had a clear vision of where he was getting to. That had to be left to some extent to opportunity and circumstance. The thing was to keep moving: stagnation was death: 'Get action,' he cried, 'do things; be sane, don't fritter away your time; create, act, take a place wherever you are and be somebody; get action.' [5] It was his watchword for fifty years.

The earliest development of the instinct for action is apt to be athletic sports. When Roosevelt began to train his body, he naturally turned to these and his passion for them continued all his life. In college he had not the physique for baseball or football, but he boxed energetically and successfully. He always insisted, with his boys and generally, that sports should not be the end of life, but as a means their value could hardly be overrated. He boxed and wrestled with professionals as Governor and President until he lost an eye by the blow of an adversary. His so-called 'tennis-

cabinet' was partly composed of ministers and diplomats. He rode rough horses, and even in Washington he loved to take his guests on hard and often dangerous walks, climbing cliffs and swimming streams whenever he came across them. Among his endless expressions of this athletic passion I do not know a more vivid one than his outcry to Archie Butt: 'I have just had a splendid fencing match, and if I don't get some of these international complications off my chest I will expire. I feel as if I could whip an elephant, so the next best thing is to take a good ride, and Roswell has not been out for some time. I think I would like to try his mettle. This has been one of the most trying days to me in many a month, but I feel just as happy as if I had been lying in a bed of sweet peas dreaming of the millennium.' [6]

It was inevitable that hunting should figure largely in the athletic list. Fishing Roosevelt did not care for: it was too quiet and involved too much sedentary patience. But he chased animals always, sometimes to kill them, perhaps even oftener to study them. He rode after foxes on Long Island, he followed grizzlies in the West and lions and elephants in Africa. What he liked most in his Western adventure and what he describes admirably is the wandering in vast solitudes, the vague, tense research for possible happenings in strange surroundings and unvisited realms. Always there was the exultant energy of wild nature to be pitted against the more exultant energy of his own soul.

He relished also the skill of the thing. He himself insists that his poor vision and constant dependence upon glasses made him a no more than average shot, though others rate him better. But he emphasizes the fact that the hunter's success must depend even more upon nerve and steadiness than upon mere dexterity, and the firm, patient discipline that he had given his nerves enabled him to appear better in dangerous crises than a more skilful marksman might have done.

And he liked danger, throve on it, makes it evident that he did, without undue exaltation of his taste in the matter. 'While danger ought never to be needlessly incurred,' he says, 'it is yet true that the keenest zest in sport comes from its presence and from the consequent exertion of the qualities necessary to overcome it.' [7] Broken bones and general damage did not deter him: he did not dread them beforehand or attend to them afterwards. His attitude early and late was that of one of his youthful letters: 'I am always willing to pay the piper when I have had a good dance; and every now and then I like to drink the wine of life with brandy in it.' [8]

For what he sought, in hunting as in athletics, was the intense, oblivious excitement. He could not bear to do nothing: idleness made his nerves throb and quiver and jar: 'Unless I was bear hunting all the time, I am afraid I should soon get as restless with this life as with the life at home.' [9] When he sees a lion charge a group of natives and

kill one of them, he cries, with tense vividness: 'I don't think the whole thing had lasted ten seconds, but it was ten as exciting seconds as I ever had in my life. I did not want to see it again.' [10] He preferred to have the lion charge him, but he liked the excitement any way. He did not stop to think what a cruel reflection upon life it is that the best thing in it is the passion that makes us forget it. It was just such reflections that he would not bother with and action drove them away. How superbly significant is his reference to the well-known quotation from Horace: 'Black care rarely sits behind a rider whose pace is fast enough.' [11] Yet there is always the old ballad refrain,

'Gallop, gallop, gallop along:
You cannot outride death.'

II

Undoubtedly the fiercest and most enthralling excitement of all is the military, just plain fighting, and military matters had a fascination for Roosevelt from start to finish. He loved the study of technical military details, all of them, the description of weapons, the intricate analysis of manœuvres. His first literary work was a 'History of the Naval War of 1812,' with minute accounts of all the naval battles, and in his later 'Winning of the West' it is evident that the virile fighting of those hardy, rugged borderers and wanderers was what appealed to him most and what he narrated with most vigor. He was always interested in great

soldiers, in Napoleon, in Moltke, in Grant, in Lee. His most effective and telling achievement in biography is his 'Oliver Cromwell,' and while he develops Cromwell the administrator with the keen sympathy of one who understands the problems from actual experience, his most sympathetic portrayal is given to the victor of Edgehill and Marston Moor and Worcester.

The greatest of the many controversies in regard to Roosevelt is that concerning his attitude toward war and peace. His own position as to the theory of the matter is perfectly definite and explicit. When there is question between peace and righteousness, he does not hesitate a moment. The saying of Franklin, that there was never a good war or a bad peace, did not appeal to him. He is positive on this point and reiterated his statements at all times: 'I abhor war.... But if I must choose between righteousness and peace, I choose righteousness.' [12] Again: 'We must insist on righteousness first and foremost. We must strive for peace always; but we must never hesitate to put righteousness above peace.' [13]

At the same time no one could express a more earnest love for peace in the abstract or hatred of war. 'No one dreads war as I do,' he said to Butt in 1908. '... The little that I have seen of it, and I have seen only a little, leaves a horrible picture on my mind.' [14] And elsewhere he exclaims, more abruptly, 'Nobody wants war who has any sense.' [15] What is much more important than a mere senti-

mental declaration is all that Roosevelt solidly achieved for peace in one way or another. Sometimes by quick, decided action he averted the danger of an outbreak, for example in the Venezuela case or that of the Alaskan boundary, as to which Lord Charnwood's evidence is most significant, who says, 'I began to study this point with feelings of intense indignation against Roosevelt and I ended with the absolute conviction that he did both a very able and a most right and friendly thing.' [16] Sometimes he exercised endless tact and ingenuity, as in bringing Germany and France together at the Algeciras Conference and most notably in the triumphant conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. Above all, he could himself say, with entire justice and pardonable satisfaction that during the seven years of his presidency the United States had enjoyed profound and uninterrupted peace without even the serious menace of fighting anywhere, which for a reputedly firebrand president is surely a significant boast.

Yet underneath the persistent and loyal effort for peace you cannot fail to recognize the constitutional lover of war for itself. The man was a fighter by nature, and fighting was, after all, the most attractive of human occupations. Courage was the most essential if not the greatest of virtues and cowardice the most contemptible of sins. A nation should develop the virtues of peace, but all these were of minor consequence compared to the readiness for necessary war: 'No nation should ever

wage war wantonly, but no nation should ever avoid it at the cost of the loss of national honor. A nation should never fight unless forced to; but it should always be ready to fight.' [17]

Even more than the duty of fighting is the pleasure of fighting, the pure exhilaration of furious combat and resultant triumph. Sometimes the duty and the pleasure are subtly intermingled: 'Greatness means strife for nation and man alike. A soft, easy life is not worth living, if it impairs the fibre of brain and heart and muscle. We must dare to be great; and we must realize that greatness is the fruit of toil and sacrifice and high courage.' [18] Sometimes it is the simple, naïve expression of personal desire: 'If it wasn't wrong I should say that personally I would rather welcome a foreign war.' [19] Sometimes it is a frank proclamation of the glorious virtues war is supposed to promote: 'Glory and honor give what riches can never give.... The victories of peace are great, but the victories of war are greater.... No triumphs of peace can equal the armed triumph over malice domestic or foreign levy. No qualities called out by a purely peaceful life stand on a level with those stern and virile virtues which move the men of stout heart and strong hand who uphold the honor of their flag in battle.' [20]

So one asks oneself, how far the direct dream of personal ambition and military glory haunted him in connection with his own career. The answer is that it was always present, perhaps more or less

obscurely. When the Spanish War broke out and he went to Cuba in 1898, he proclaimed that he was answering the call of duty, but it requires little insight to perceive that he felt it to be the opportunity of a life. How the mixture of passionate motives appears in his comment to Butt: 'You know what my wife and children mean to me: and yet I made up my mind that I would not allow even a death to stand in my way; that it was my one chance to cut my little notch on the stick that stands as a measuring rod in every family. I know now that I would have turned from my wife's deathbed to have answered that call.' [21]

With such motives dominant and such a spiritual attitude, the question of the man's personal courage is hardly worth discussing. Whether it was inborn or cultivated, it was certainly there. More interesting is the consideration of what he himself has to say about his courage, for some of his enemies have represented him as too inclined to stress that virtue as well as some others. A man who talked so much was bound to say some things better left unsaid, but in a wide reading of Roosevelt's utterances I have gathered the impression of on the whole a very sincere modesty. He was immensely interested in his good qualities and what they could do for him, but I think he is generally disposed to underrate rather than overrate them. I have, however, found the sentences that gushed out of him unpremeditated in Milwaukee, when he made his way to the platform immediately after being shot by an as-

sassin, singularly illuminating for character, with the naïve egotism which shows most of all in the attempt to cover it up.

More important than the question of personal courage is the point of leadership. Would Roosevelt have made a great general if he had been given the opportunity? We shall never know. The gift of inspiring men and making them do things he certainly had. Whether he could have conceived and carried out successful campaigns can merely be conjectured. That he dreamed and hoped he could is I think beyond question and some of his comments on his achievements in Cuba are illuminating in this regard. Thus, he writes to Lodge, 'I have been both astonished and pleased at my own ability in the line of tactics.' [22] And again, 'I do not want to be vain, but I do not think that any one else could have handled this regiment quite as I have handled it.' [23]

With this battling instinct it might be supposed that Roosevelt would be pugnacious in daily life and at any rate in earlier days would have been constantly getting into personal conflict. This does not seem to have been the case at all. He was for the most part, gentle, considerate, and self-restrained in manner and the references to actual quarreling are extremely rare. When he took part in a torchlight parade in college, he stepped out of the ranks to demolish a bystander who had insulted him. Once, and apparently once only, in his variegated Western career, he came into collision

with a truculent bully, and there was little left of the bully at the end. But in general he lived up to both members of his favorite proverb, 'Speak softly and carry a big stick.' The stick was large enough and came down hard enough when it was needed, but the soft speech was more essential and more efficacious in everyday life.

Yet, just as in the hunting, what he relished in a fight was the fierce, mad oblivion, the absorbing rush of immediate sensation, overwhelming and obliterating past and future in one superb present instant. It was this that he supremely enjoyed in the stunning hours in Cuba and that made him say of them tc Riis, with a half-sigh, 'So all things pass away, but they were beautiful days.' [24] And the hot fury of this relish well appears in his general comment on such matters: 'Every man who has in him any real power of joy in battle knows that he feels it when the wolf begins to rise in his heart; he does not then shrink from blood or sweat or deem that they mar the fight, he revels in them, in the toil, the pain, and the danger, as but setting off the triumph.' [25]

With this ardent love of military achievement and military glory, is it not a strange and tragic fact that the man should have lived through the greatest war in history and by his own wilful mistake been prevented from having any part in it whatever?

III

Roosevelt was much the same in private life that he was in public, except that certain aspects were naturally more developed and others less. The fury of action was at no time needed to make his own immediate way in the world, at any rate for getting money. He inherited a moderate property and his wife had considerably more, so that he did not have to worry about supplying funds, though he often had a large salary and in later years, through the advantage of his position, was able to earn large sums by his writing.

But he always proclaimed and manifestly felt a considerable indifference to money. He left the management of his property to others and often hardly knew the amounts he had at his command. He spent freely and above all gave freely, lavishly. At the same time, he had a certain instinct of thrift and order which prevented his getting into trouble, and he had the best of all protections against extravagance, exceedingly simple wants and tastes. Rough living, plain fare, old clothes were preferable rather than otherwise. He knew what luxuries were well enough, and at times could savor them, but he could cast them aside at a moment's notice. He did not smoke. In spite of the accusations brought against him, which he was finally forced to rebut by a suit for libel, he was a most temperate drinker. His vigorous body required abundant food, and he liked plenty of rare beefsteak, but he laughed at costly viands and dispensed with them.

The testimony of those who served him personally seems to be favorable. He had the same gift for attaching his domestics that allured foreign ministers and machine politicians. What is especially notable in a man of his disposition is the absence of temper. 'I have seen him angry a few times,' says one who was long with him, 'and his anger was a thing to behold. But it was extremely rare.' [26] The affection of many is well summed up in the words of one old worker at the White House: 'I don't know what there is about the man to make me feel so. I have seen a good many Presidents come and go in this old house and I liked them all. They were all good and kind; but I declare I feel as if I could go twice as far and twice as quick when he asks me to, and do it twice as gladly.' [27]

Roosevelt is most of all charming in his family connections. He adored his six children and declared, with what he at any rate felt to be perfect sincerity, that he liked nothing better than to be with them. He was indeed determined that the boys should be hardy and brave and he sent them all into the war without hesitation. The intensity of this attitude appears well in Mrs. Storer's anecdote: 'He glared at me and said through his clenched teeth, "I would rather one of them should die than have them grow up weaklings."' To which Mrs. Storer adds that Ted and Kermit, having overheard this, came to their father the next day and said, 'Father, we have consulted together as

to which of us must die and we have decided that it shall be the baby.' [28]

All which does not for a moment detract from the charm that one feels everywhere in the little volume of Roosevelt's letters to his children. It is true, I cannot help noting a certain curious excess of child-likeness in the writer, such as is suggested in Mrs. Roosevelt's comment to Mrs. Storer when the children were being taken early to Sagamore, 'For heaven's sake, don't put it into Theodore's head to go too: I should have another child to take care of.' [29] The tone I mean shows in the well-known boyish expletives. It shows in the superabundance of 'dears' and 'darlings' and 'blesseds.' And the effects of it are implied in many anecdotes like Mr. Wister's record of Roosevelt's remark when some one urged him to give more attention to his daughter Alice: 'Listen. I can be President of the United States — or — I can attend to Alice.' [30] But it was just the boyishness that enabled Roosevelt so perfectly to understand his children, to enter into their sports and their troubles, and to enjoy them, as he did, so amply and so enduringly.

And if Roosevelt loved his children, he also loved his wife, and no doubt wives, though the earlier Alice Lee is to us little more than a vague and charming shadow. The second Mrs. Roosevelt was the dominating influence in the life that dominated the world. When Roosevelt turned from swaying Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, to the domestic hearth, he was himself swayed by that wise and

gentle power, which knew its strength because it knew its limits. Read Charles Willis Thompson's account of the wife's absolute control of conditions during her husband's stay in the hospital after he was shot.[31] It is merely symptomatic of her control at all times.

And Roosevelt recognized her excellencies and praised them with the lavish tenderness of eulogy of which he was always so capable: 'She is better read, and her value of literary merit is better than mine. I have a tremendous admiration for her judgment. She is not only cultured but scholarly.'[32]

The result of this domestic felicity was to make Roosevelt an ardent advocate of family life, and he could not sufficiently express his disgust with the irregularities and the free living and loving that were coming more and more into vogue. A man should marry and love his wife and have a lot of children to fight for their country, and he formulated and everywhere urged his campaign against birth control and race suicide. To be sure, there is a certain characteristic naïveté in his comment, if correctly reported, when some one argued that an increase of family might be difficult for economic reasons which did not affect Roosevelt himself, 'By George! I never thought of that,' but the enthusiasm is impressive, especially as coming from one who said of himself, 'I have had the happiest home life of any man whom I have ever known.'[33]

He not only liked his wife and children, he liked people in general. He does indeed sometimes complain of the tediousness of society: his direct, forthright disposition rebelled against formality and conventions. Nevertheless, he did like men and women, liked to meet them and to talk with them and to know them. There is immense significance, for character in general and for the social relation in particular, in his remark, when some one emphasized his power of making people believe he liked them, 'By George, I don't believe I ever do talk with a man five minutes without liking him very much, unless I disliked him very much.' [34] It was this spontaneous response to people, this immediate, vital interest in them, that made them take to him and love him and accounted for a large part of his undeniable charm.

He was not only quick in his likings and dislikings, he was loyal, stuck to his friends and believed in them, even against the evidence of circumstances and the testimony of those cooler and better informed. He was unquestionably susceptible to flattery and when a man expressed great devotion, he was too apt to take him at his face value. His insight, so keen and reliable in larger relations, sometimes failed him here.

One of the most delightful of his social assets was his humor, which flooded everything. He could be stern enough and grim enough, when emergency demanded. Then the set, angry glare would break into a laugh, and he would smooth and soften

things with a quick jest or an apt story, as often as not told against himself.

The humor was but one element in a flow of conversation which by universal testimony must have been among the most brilliant and absorbing in the world. 'He simply talks as he thinks; but he nearly always does that,' says Archie Butt.[35] If so, his thinking must have been versatile if not always profound. The general effect of the talk is admirably rendered by Mr. Kipling, who says that Roosevelt would 'come and pour out projects, discussions of men and politics, criticisms of books, in a swift and full-volumed stream tremendously emphatic and enlivened by bursts of humor. I curled up on the seat opposite and listened and wondered, until the universe seemed to be spinning around and Theodore was the spinner.' [36]

The curious thing is, that with this immense, engrossing personality, this impetuous instinct for filling the universe with himself, the man was also an excellent listener and had an extraordinary gift of response. He entered into the thoughts and lives of others because he was intensely interested in them, wanted to know how they lived and what for. And as a result of the understanding, he had a quick tact, a skill in dealing with situations and characters, which showed most in politics and largely accounted for his political success, but was manifest in all the ordinary relations of life. He fitted people together without their knowing that he did so. Whether it was a cowboy or a rough rider or a New

York politician or a diplomat, he knew what to say to him, and for the time at any rate to make him see things as Roosevelt saw them.

And, eager as he was to put forth and promulgate his own opinions, he was always on the watch for the opinions of others and accepted what was good in them. When he made an important statement, wrote a message to Congress or a weighty diplomatic paper, he consulted every expert and often rewrote and altered a dozen times, to embody the best judgment on the subject that he could possibly get besides his own.

Thus, it must be admitted that his social qualities and his social charm were as many-sided as possible. Yet, with it all, I cannot help feeling that there must have been a certain fatigue, at any rate for sensitive nerves and muscles easily fatigued, about living with him. That perpetual vehemence, that fierce, dynamic energy of constant affirmation, the furious gestures, the highly colored speech, must have been wearying at times. I speak with feeling, having passed a considerable portion of my life with just such a character. No matter how much one admires it, or precisely because one admires it as a reproach to one's own indolence and inefficacy, one is apt to be exhausted by it.

Even petty habits are significant of this vehemence of spirit. Roosevelt loved a rocking-chair, and as he talked would rock and rock and rock himself, way across the room. It gets on your nerves like the rocking of a ship at sea. Or take the

little anecdote John Burroughs tells. One evening he was sitting quietly reading with the President and Mrs. Roosevelt in their summer retreat in Virginia: 'Suddenly Roosevelt's hand came down on the table with such a bang that it made us both jump, and Mrs. Roosevelt exclaimed, in a slightly nettled tone: "Why, my dear, what *is* the matter?" He had killed a mosquito with a blow that would almost have demolished an African lion.' [37] He killed mosquitoes as if they were lions, and lions as if they were mosquitoes.

IV

The fury of living showed as much in the inner life as in the outer. Roosevelt himself speaks somewhere of 'those who care intensely both for thought and for action.' Assuredly he was one of them. Yet his thinking was so energetic, so dynamic, so strenuous, to use his own favorite word, that it seems almost more like action than like reflective calm.

I have tried to distinguish any very important influences in Roosevelt's early intellectual life, but without much success. His father and mother greatly affected his character. No doubt they affected his mind to a considerable extent. He himself said that he got little out of college. It does not appear that any particular teacher gave him inspiration or spiritual impetus. In fact, he seems to have made his own mind, as he made his own body, and to have reached out far and wide for what he wanted, when he found he wanted it.

His faculty of getting what he wanted, intellectually, as in other things, was remarkable and most impressive. Evidence pours in from all sides as to his quickness and sureness and depth of mental grasp. When a subject interested him, he could concentrate all his powers on that point, extract from it all that was to be extracted, and then turn to something else. He would take up a book or a state paper and, with the same speed and ease that Macaulay had, make himself master of its contents in a few moments and show that he had mastered them by his breadth and facility in discussing them. As James Bryce, surely a thorough and competent scholar, put it, in one particular connection: 'Was there ever such a man before? How he knew all the facts or where he gathered them I cannot imagine. I have been studying almost for a lifetime on the very subject on which he was talking, and yet he seems to have gone deeper in three weeks' preparation than I almost in a lifetime.' [38]

The rapidity of intellectual grasp was no more notable than the extent and the variety of it. Apparently the man read everything. At any rate, he read all sorts of things. When Norton Nichols expressed to Gray his astonishment at the poet's diversity of reading, Gray said, 'Why should you be surprised, since I do nothing else?' Roosevelt seemed to do pretty much everything in the world besides read, yet he himself spoke of reading as perhaps his greatest pleasure and he somehow found time to do an enormous amount of it, partly

by disregarding the sleep and rest which most people require. When he arrived in Saint Louis for the great Fair, after a fatiguing journey, he horrified his sister, who was no weakling, by proposing that, instead of going to bed, he should give her a course in history by reviewing a couple of books.[39] And the result of the varied reading is well indicated in Viscount Lee's record of the President's dazzling variety of talk: 'Whether the subject of the moment was political economy, the Greek drama, tropical fauna or flora, the Irish sagas, protective coloration in nature, metaphysics, the technique of football, or post-futurist painting, he was equally at home with the experts and drew out the best that was in them.'[40] Probably the real secret lies in the last clause: he knew how to ask questions on every subject in the world.

But it is well to be a little more specific. As to languages Roosevelt was perhaps not very exact or scholarly, but he spoke and read a number of them with considerable facility, enough to get and give what he wanted. He was interested in every form of literature, and the more because from a very early date he aspired to be an author himself. Here, as in other lines, he disclaimed genius, but if genius is the dynamic faculty of doing things — and what else is it? — few persons have had more. Certainly he did things in literature. If you go through the twenty volumes of his works, as I have, you will think so, and what he wrote is astonishingly fresh, vigorous, and varied, not

perhaps remarkable for original thinking, but with the stamp of personality which the man gave to everything.

Naturally he was interested in history, for history was the story of men who did things, and he was determined to be one of them. But he was also interested in art, perhaps more in poetry and painting than in music, which always escaped him to a considerable extent. Above all he was interested in science, and in the early days it even seemed as if natural history rather than politics was the field in which he would make his fame. He began to collect as a boy and to make exact and systematic studies, and the discussions of biology and palæontology which appear in the midst of his political activity are set down by experts as worth serious attention. As a lover and careful observer of outdoor life he was notable at all times and he used to amaze the inhabitants of Washington by his studies of birds in the gardens of the White House. When he was in England, he took a bird walk with Lord Grey and astonished his friend by his skill in comparing the English birds with the American. But I have been even more impressed by the story of his picking up a bit of fluff in the White House grounds and indicating wonder that a fox sparrow should have been there. When he was asked how he could possibly tell, he answered, 'Well, you see I have really made a great study of sparrows.' [41] Now any one who has given even a little attention to that subject knows how complicated it is. Yet this man had

things to think of that were of more importance than many sparrows.

Viscount Lee suggests that Roosevelt could discuss metaphysics as well as other subjects. He knew the outline of the great philosophies and the technical history of religious doctrines and could enlarge on these matters with force and effect. Yet just here it seems to me that we strike the weakness, if weakness is the word for anything in such a man. This vast fury of living, the constant, ever-varied externality and objectivity, interfered to some extent with a calm inwardness, did not encourage or nourish a secure breadth of spiritual poise. In these respects there is a rather striking similarity with Macaulay, whom Roosevelt so greatly admired. Macaulay, too, cultivated the fury of living, though with him the living was perhaps more intellectual than actual. The point is that in both cases the breadth was greater than the depth, the surface variety obscured the profounder spiritual mysteries.

Take in contrast the other great object of Roosevelt's admiration, Abraham Lincoln. It may be that with Lincoln the inwardness was somewhat excessive. Certainly the excess of it in morbidness has no counterpart in Roosevelt. Depression, discouragement, the sense of defect, the admission of failure, these things may have overwhelmed him at times from external circumstances, as Mr. Einstein suggests in his excellent study, but constitutional melancholy was not in Roosevelt's nature. And it

may be that his method of taking life for what it is worth and simply living it with all the power that is in you is the best method. Yet somehow in Lincoln I feel a spiritual solidity which is lacking in Roosevelt as in Macaulay and the lack always makes Roosevelt seem a little unreal. He believed he was the most sincere man in the world, in a way he was so. Yet all the time I feel that he was duping himself at any rate, playing a game, 'the great game in which we are all engaged,' as he puts it in his Autobiography,[42] forcing optimism, forcing enjoyment with the desperate instinctive appreciation that if he let the pretense drop for a moment, the whole scheme of things would vanish away. This sense of unreality of forced optimism, is admirably suggested in Mr. Wister's comment: 'The wistfulness blurred his eyes — that misty perplexity and pain which Sargent has caught so well. This look was the sign of frequent conflict between what he knew and his wish not to know it, his determination to grasp his optimism tight, lest it escape him in the many darknesses that rose around him all along his way.' [43]

I feel the unreality, the lack of inwardness, most when I turn to the analysis of Roosevelt's emotional life. Take love. He had profound human affections, but did the passion of being in love ever take hold of him as a devastating spiritual experience? Perhaps, but I find no suggestion of it anywhere. Take the æsthetic emotions. I find no evidence of self-forgetting rapture. Even the enjoyment of

natural beauty does not reach the last touch of ecstasy. Roosevelt was a deft manipulator of words, like Macaulay, and sometimes as in the superb description of the mocking-bird in 'The Wilderness Hunter,' [44] he attains a poetical height; but I never get the deepest thrill of the real nature-worshiper, like Keats, or Guérin, or Sand, or Sénancour.

Most of all, there is religion. Whole books have been written about Roosevelt's religion. To me they simply prove that he did not have any. He had a profound sense of conduct in this world, of morals. His expression of the matter is: 'I know not how philosophers may ultimately define religion; but from Micah to James it has been defined as service to one's fellow-men rendered by following the great rule of justice and mercy, of wisdom and righteousness.' [45] What appealed to him most in the Bible was the stern and vehement justice of the old Hebrew tribal deity. Now to me religion is the love of God, the need of God, the longing for God, and the constant sense of another world than this. I cannot find God insistent or palpable anywhere in the writings or the life of Theodore Roosevelt. He had no need of him and no longing, because he really had no need of anything but his own immensely sufficient self. And the abundant, crowding, magnificent presence of this world left no room for another. Bishop's Life of Roosevelt ends with a quotation which seems to sum up the whole story: 'It is idle to complain or to rail at the in-

evitable; serene and high of heart we must face our fate and go down into the darkness.' [46] I do not see God here anywhere at all.

V

As this world was the supreme concern, so the supreme concern in this world for Roosevelt was politics, which satisfied his two controlling instincts of dealing with men, and dominating them. The first thing to establish in his political attitude is his fundamental idealism. He wanted great things, he wanted good things, to do lasting good to mankind. He was for neither the poor nor the rich, as such, but for fairness and justice to all, seeking that every man should get his deserts, honest effort and earnest labor their due reward, and shiftlessness and idleness their due reward also. And curiously enough, as with Roosevelt's antitype Wilson, there was the gift of crystallizing these somewhat vague ideals in terms and phrases like 'speak softly and carry a big stick,' 'muckraking,' 'the strenuous life,' which nailed them with golden rivets in the memory of mankind. Unquestionably the idealism had something elementary about it, as is suggested in Root's gibe, that Theodore had discovered the Ten Commandments. The peculiarity of the discovery was the vigor and vividness with which the Commandments were preached, as with the fervid ardor of a Hebrew prophet. And the advantage was that the very generality made it possible to be conveniently

inconsistent. You could change your plan of action pretty much as you pleased, and still that superb ideal hovered above you with its protecting wings.

Also, as Roosevelt in politics was ideal, he was always practical and prided himself on it. Uncompromising idealists accused him of compounding with sin, and especially with sinners. He was careful to distinguish. Sin, in his own view, he never compounded with, under any circumstances. But sinners — who among you is without sin? Men are creatures of mingled good and evil, all of them, Theodore Roosevelt like any one else. You must look for the good and use it where you find it, and let the evil go. That he was always successful in making his selection he would have been the last to maintain. But unless you made it, your magnificent work for ideals could never go on. He shook his skirts clear of what he so often called 'the lunatic fringe' in the reforming party, as in others, and tried to keep his eyes squarely on such precepts of common-sense as the following: 'One of the most efficient methods of averting the consequences of a dangerous agitation which is eighty per cent wrong is to remedy the twenty per cent of evil as to which the agitation is well founded.' [47] Acting on such an attitude, he did an immense deal of good in the world and no doubt some harm.

Another characteristic of Roosevelt's political life was his habit of going straight at his end as soon as he saw it. He had no use for the timidity of

those who stopped too long to inquire whether the process was wise or safe. If the end was right and the means not wrong in themselves, he would not dally with too curious inquisition as to detail. Get the thing securely done, and let the inquiring come afterwards. Yet at the same time, while he was often criticised for arbitrary and violent procedure, as most notably in the affair of the Panama Canal, no man has ever stated the case against such procedure with more vigor and clearness and more evident conviction than he does in his Cromwell: 'Cromwell's extreme admirers treat his impatience of the delays and shortcomings of ordinary constitutional and legal procedure as a sign of his greatness. It was just the reverse. In great crises it may be necessary to overturn constitutions and disregard statutes, just as it may be necessary to establish a vigilance committee or take refuge in lynch law; but such a remedy is always dangerous even when absolutely necessary; and the moment it becomes the habitual remedy, it is a proof that society is going backward.' [48]

Whatever may be thought of the ideals, the practical aims, or the methods, the summary of Roosevelt's political achievements was surely something that any man could look back upon with satisfaction: the reform of the New York police, the long labor on the Civil Service, the building of the Panama Canal, the Peace of Portsmouth, the settlement of the Coal Strike, the initiation of the forestry and conservation policies. Perhaps the dis-

covery of the Commandments had a certain embodied vitality, after all.

The most essential element in political success is the handling of men, and in this Roosevelt was always a master. His power of leading, of inspiring, of making people believe that they could do things, was extraordinary. He himself, while, as usual, disclaiming any particular genius, suggested that if he had anything of the kind, it was perhaps a genius for leadership. It is easy to call this magnetism, but it may be that the deeper secret is a sure and swift understanding. Roosevelt had a keen instinct for what the people in general were thinking and wanting, though he himself liked to put this instinct on a larger basis: 'I did not "divine" how the people were going to think; I simply made up my mind what they *ought* to think, and then did my best to get them to think it.'[49]

And the general instinct of understanding became still more complete and effective when it was a matter of dealing with individuals, as we have already seen in Roosevelt's social life. He had an inimitable quickness and sureness of tact in handling persons, whether big or little. Take the Kaiser. He sent word that he should be glad to see the ex-President, but could give him only three quarters of an hour. Roosevelt answered that he should be delighted to see him, but could spare only twenty minutes. Take the anti-Jewish agitator who expected to stir up endless trouble by a meeting in New York. Roosevelt, as Police Commissioner, got

together some thirty Jewish policemen, and told them he relied upon them to see that the meeting was absolutely quiet. It was — and amounted to nothing. And the supreme instance of this diplomatic tact was the handling of Japan and Russia to bring about peace. The delicacy and difficulty of the negotiations was indescribable, but Roosevelt managed it all with a patience, a persistence, a discretion that nothing could deter or defeat, and the enthusiastic praise of King Edward and the Kaiser is the best evidence of his success.

The most difficult of all human beings for a man to handle is himself, and Roosevelt's success here was as marked as with others. We have seen with what mastery he handled his body. If his manipulation of his soul was not always so far-reaching, it was at any rate as masterly. He had supreme deft skill in turning even defects and passions into virtues and excellences and making them appear so to himself as well as to others. There is ambition, the mighty reach for power and success. As Mr. Einstein well puts it, 'The sense of power provides the greatest of intoxicants, for even after power has vanished, its effect never wears off.' [50] Just a wave of the wand, and ambition becomes simply the passion to be useful, to do good, to be remembered as the benefactor of one's country and mankind. There is the love of notoriety, of publicity. Roosevelt's enemies were never tired of accusing him of this, with some apparent justification. But when the enchanter touched this motive also, it became

only open-mindedness, the large candid sense of having nothing to conceal, the willingness to live your life before all men because it was a life that could be so lived. As for the passion for acting, for doing something, it did not need to be transformed, when you gloried in it and considered it to be your greatest asset and your greatest strength.

So indeed the love of action, the fury of living, may be said to be the basis of Roosevelt's political, as of all his other life. It was the root of his tremendous, extraordinary power of work. He wearied his servants, his secretaries, his aides, his ministers, and his enemies, by being able to outwork them all. And as his power of work seemed endless, so equally endless was his eager acceptance of responsibility. Others seek to avoid it, to diminish it, to divide it. He goes out and devours it wherever he can. When his colleagues in the Civil Service Commission leave for an outing, he writes: 'I like it; it is more satisfactory than having a divided responsibility, and it enables me to take more decided steps.' [51] For this was his third great active quality, decision. Others shrink from it, put the burden on some one else where they can. Roosevelt made great, vital decisions unhesitatingly, and rejoiced in doing so. Mistakes? Of course you make mistakes: life is a tissue of mistakes. Forget them, and begin again, and do better, but go on deciding as best you can to the end.

In this matter of quick decision it was often alleged that Roosevelt was hasty and inconsider-

ate, that his decisions were violent and ill-judged. But those who were nearest to him and best qualified to pronounce are emphatic in insisting upon the contrary. They say that he appeared to act hastily because he acted quickly, but that as a matter of fact even his most apparently violent actions were the result of mature, careful, and well advised deliberation; it was merely that he deliberated in half or a tenth of the time that most men would.

Yet with all this undeniable executive power and success, I still return to the certain lack of inwardness and spiritual poise which I have before indicated, and I find in these things the explanation of the element of tragedy and failure in Roosevelt's later years. His admirers insist that there was no failure, that the force of his moral influence from 1912 to 1919, in the renovation of business morals, in the stimulation of exalted patriotism during the War, was the greatest of all his triumphs. Nevertheless, the suggestion of tragedy was there, and I think you can readily trace it in Roosevelt himself, in spite of all his somewhat labored optimism. It is subtly prophecied in his remark at the time of his enthusiastic reception in New York, after he returned from Europe: 'I may be on the crest of the wave now, but mark my words, the attitude of that crowd means that they will soon try to help me into the trough of the wave.' [52]

The Roosevelt tragedy seems to me to centre in two things. The first is the campaign of 1912.

Could there be a more fascinating illustration of the tangle of human motives than that? Roosevelt himself insisted, no doubt with entire sincerity, that he had no personal ambition, no animosity against Taft, and no desire whatever to return to public life. He was forced to run by the urgency of his followers and the manifest duty of carrying out the policies which he had initiated and which were being betrayed. Yet it is evident all through that he was bitterly jealous of Taft even from 1908 on and that the desire steadily grew to rush once more into the field and to get his hand on the wheel. And what was the outcome? If he had loyally helped to make Taft President, he himself in 1916 might have been commander-in-chief in France or President or both. Is it possible to imagine a much more tragic climax?

The other incident is even more concentrated in its intensity, that of Roosevelt's personal appeal to Wilson in 1917 to be allowed to go to France. When you think of all that scene involved and implied, it seems to me one of the most dramatic in history. Roosevelt had repeatedly spoken of Wilson with infinite contempt, as a tricky, astute, time-serving politician, a man without ideals and without ideas. Yet he humiliated himself, went down on his spiritual knees before this man, simply because he could grant or deny the dearest wish of Roosevelt's heart — and the wish was refused. The scene is all the more impressive because it was so quiet and restrained and the conduct of the actors was so

completely dignified and decorous throughout; for under all the decorum you feel the passions boiling and seething, the triumph of rejecting on the one hand and the cruel bitterness of being rejected on the other. Only Shakespeare or Saint-Simon could depict or detail that scene. It was the dramatic climax of Roosevelt's life. And surely it was most tragic.

So we are left with the question of what the future might have held for Roosevelt, if he had lived. There was a new world to be made after the War, and Roosevelt's admirers believe he might have made it. His idealism, his enthusiasm, his confidence, were just what the world needed. So Lincoln's admirers believe he would have adjusted the far less serious difficulties left by the Civil War. Yet the best thing that ever happened to Lincoln for his glory was to die when he did. Perhaps it was the best thing for Roosevelt.

II

BRAINS WIN AND LOSE

WOODROW WILSON

CHRONOLOGY

THOMAS WOODROW WILSON.

Born, Staunton, Virginia, December 28, 1856.
Graduated Princeton, 1879.
Married Ellen Axson, June 24, 1885.
Ph.D., Johns Hopkins, 1886.
Professor at Bryn Mawr, 1885–88.
Professor at Wesleyan, 1888–90.
Professor at Princeton, 1890–1902.
President Princeton, 1902–10.
Governor of New Jersey, 1911–13.
President, 1913–21.
Married Edith Bolling Galt, December 18, 1915.
Signed Treaty of Versailles, June 28, 1919.
Died, February 3, 1924.

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WOODROW WILSON

II

BRAINS WIN AND LOSE
WOODROW WILSON

I

It would not be just to speak of Wilson as all brains. There was plenty of emotional life also. Yet you feel always that the intellect was the driving, the controlling force, and the defects of brains are as obvious in him as the excellences. For brains can do the greatest things in the world, they can develop ideals, they can build up states and civilizations, but they can also mislead and ruin and shatter an individual who puts a too blind trust in them.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born in Staunton, Virginia, in 1856. He came of that Scotch-Irish stock which gave America Andrew and Stonewall Jackson and so many other stubborn workers and fighters. His ancestors were teachers and ministers and the hereditary taint was in his blood, but always he wanted to manage men as well as to instruct them. He did not shine in his early education nor in the attempted practice of law. But when he began to teach at Bryn Mawr, at Wesleyan, and at Princeton, he showed the stuff that was in him. His success as a teacher and his evident energy and initiative made him President of Princeton, and his efforts to democratize education in that ancient university made him a conspicuous figure

to the whole country, though circumstances prevented him from achieving his ideals. What he had done — and said — at Princeton brought him the governorship of New Jersey in 1910 and this was merely a stepping-stone in his sudden and astonishing passage to the Presidency in 1912, when the split in the Republican Party gave the Democrats an easy victory. Wilson was first interested in domestic reforms, the re-shaping of the tariff and the universally lauded establishment of the Federal Reserve System, though these were more or less interrupted by disturbed conditions in Mexico. Then in 1914 came the Great War and Wilson was faced with heavier burdens than had come to any president since Lincoln, while the burden was made much more severe by the loss of his wife who for years had been his beloved companion and most intimate adviser. After struggling vainly to remain a force for peace rather than an agency of destruction, the President was finally compelled to join the Allies, and victory was achieved largely by American brains, money, and valor. Wilson then went to Paris to make over the world by the League of Nations. After a gigantic struggle with all sorts of contending passions and selfishnesses he returned with the world imperfectly made over in the shape of a League and a Treaty which the Senate refused to accept. In a passionate effort to persuade the American people to reverse the Senate's verdict, Wilson shattered his health completely, and the last year of his Presidency was passed under a

tragic cloud of physical feebleness and political failure. He died of a brain disease in 1924.

To begin with, it is interesting and curious to gather some of Wilson's comments on the general subject of brains, for it is evident that he had an immense, instinctive esteem for them, felt that they were the greatest agency for moving the world, at any rate his agency. And to this end he wanted them positive, sweeping with swift efficiency to conclusions which should make themselves felt as well as accepted. 'Tolerance,' he says, 'is an admirable intellectual gift; but it is of little worth in politics. Politics is a war of *causes*, a joust of principles.' [1] And further, 'In this grand contestation of warring principles he who doubts is a laggard and an impotent.' [2] The play of brain, the activity of brain, energetic, exhaustless intellectual labor, seems to him the thing in life that is really worth while: 'There is a sort of grim satisfaction in tiring one's mind out, if it be only to prove one's mastery over natural disinclinations.' [3] And the lack of brain, which is for the most part a mere indolent unwillingness to use it, always merits his infinite contempt: 'I overheard two men one day talking about a third man and one of them referred to his head. "Head," the other said, "head! that isn't a head, that's just a knot. The Almighty put that there to keep him from raveling out!" And we have to admit that there are such persons.' [4]

As Wilson appreciates the power of brains, so he fully understands their dangers, at any rate as he

perceives them in others. There is the danger of mistaking a head-load of facts for the power of using them: 'Some of the best informed men I ever met could not reason at all. You know what you mean by an extraordinarily well informed man. You mean a man who always has some fact at his command to trip you up.' [5] There is the even more serious danger of mistaking theories for facts and so endeavoring to impose them upon the world: 'Life is a very complex thing. No theory that I ever heard propounded will match its varied pattern; and the men who are dangerous are the men who are not content with understanding but go on to propound theories, things that will make a new pattern for the universe. Those are the men who are not to be trusted.' [6]

Yet to the Scotch-Irish Wilson brains in the abstract, theorizing for the curiosity and pleasure of it, seemed a vain and futile affair. When people try to relegate him and confine him to the academic cloister, he rebels and protests: 'It has always seemed to me an odd thing and a thing against nature that the literary man, the man whose citizenship and freedom are of the world of thought, should ever have been deemed an unsafe man in affairs.' [7] What are thoughts for if they are not transmuted into deeds? What are brains for if not for an illumination and a guide in making a better world to live in? And thoughts, if they are good for anything, are so great and so real that the man who prizes and cherishes them properly will be ready to

go out and do battle for them at any time: 'If I was not ready to fight for anything I believe in, I would think it my duty to go back and take a back seat.' [8]

So much for brains in general, and Wilson on his own mind is even more interesting. When he is cool and detached, he is aware of the limitations and defects of the intellect, no man more so. It is apt to lead to subtle and ingenious insincerity, as he suggests in a comment on Jefferson, 'the sort of insincerity which subtle natures yield to without loss of essential integrity.' [9] It is apt to lead to pride and wilfulness, as when he says of himself, 'I am proud and wilful beyond measure,' [10] and as is intimated in the remark of Professor Perry, 'I used to think that his only real fault of character was his impatience with the slower processes of other men's minds.' [11] And in Wilson's case at any rate it is apt to lead to intense concentration in one field of view to the exclusion of other solutions and important considerations, which is what he meant by the widely quoted description of his 'single-track mind.'

On the other hand, it requires but little acquaintance with Wilson's life and words and work to appreciate his immense enjoyment of intellectual power and his constant and implicit reliance upon it: 'It is not men that interest or disturb me primarily: it is ideas. Ideas live; men die.' [12] This reliance upon the intellect was much enhanced by the fact that he did not suffer from the evil that it draws upon some of its followers, that of dissolving, disillusioning, bringing scepticism and consequent

cynicism in its train. Wilson had his moments of doubt, perhaps; but in the main the Scotch assurance in his blood made him magnificently confident in the conclusions to which his reason led him. Observer after observer insists upon his absolute conviction of the truth after he had once arrived at it. When that state of mind was reached, all that remained was to hand the conviction on to others.

One evil of the intellectual life Wilson was fully aware of and stated and reiterated with the peculiar clarity of self-revelation in which he was so often a master, that is the isolation of it. The mass of mankind do not want to think for thinking's sake, perhaps they cannot. Hence the habitual, turbulent thinker is left to himself and he cannot but feel it: 'The intellectual life is sometimes a fearfully solitary one.... The man devoted to that life is more than all other men liable to suffer from isolation, to feel utterly alone.' [13] And even finer is the passage in which he enlarges on this condition in regard to Lincoln: 'There is a very holy and very terrible isolation for the conscience of every man who seeks to readjust the destiny in affairs for others as well as for himself, for a nation as well as for individuals. That privacy no man can intrude upon. That lonely search of the spirit for the right no man can assist.' [14]

II

Thus, having emphasized the importance of brains in general in Wilson's case, it becomes of in-

terest to make a more detailed study of the swift and brilliant instrument which wrought so largely for good and evil in the world.

How much did he owe to education? Apparently not much in the ordinary sense. Like so many other men who have done great things, he educated himself: 'The rule for every man is, not to depend on the education which other men prepare for him — not even to consent to it; but to strive to see things as they are, and to be himself as he is.' [15] Hence in his various schools and colleges he was not conspicuous, and would not condescend to busy himself too much with concerns which he felt not to be his. This temper sometimes fretted his scholarly relatives. 'Tommy,' cried his uncle James, 'you can learn if you will. Then, for Heaven's sake, boy, get some of this. At least, if you have no ambition to be a scholar, you might wish to be a gentleman.' [16] The boy quietly went his own personal way, learned what he wanted and needed, and stored it up where it would do the most good when the call for it should come.

As to the special elements of intellectual activity, it does not appear that he set the highest store by mere accuracy or thoroughness. When it was necessary to go to the bottom of things, he went, with secure, unwearied probing. But he was always justly accused of a certain impatience with detail. What appealed to him far more than scholarly drudgery was the instinct of system, or order, or arrangement. This was a cardinal principle of his

life, not only in intellectual matters but in daily and practical, and it enabled him to accomplish so much, in spite of physical and spiritual handicaps. See where you are going and map out your course, then you will get somewhere. And in his teaching and in his own studies the love of clarity and lucidity was ever-present. No doubt this passion for orderliness sometimes degenerated into a plague. The teaching caste has its special defects like others. A drift towards pedantry, towards the intrusion of academic method in the wrong place, is one of them. And Wilson was not free from it. In him there was sometimes a tendency to treat men of the world like unruly and inattentive students who needed to be made to see things as they are. But unquestionably the strong instinct of lucid arrangement, in thoughts and words and deeds, was one of the agents that carried him furthest.

What saved him more than anything else from the excesses of intellect and pedantry was the play of the imagination. You could not tie him down to dull research because his mind was always soaring, always keeping an outlet into the region of splendid dreams and many-colored ideals. He himself was inclined to attribute the imaginative side of his nature to an Irish element in his origin, meaning I suppose a Celtic element, and many of his biographers lay a good deal of emphasis on this. Just where the Celtic strain came into the solid Scotch-Irish ancestry is not clearly indicated. But in any

case the imagination came in and the benefits of it were beyond question.

The play of it showed above all in the infinite ability and facility with words. This love for words and their exact and delicate uses was inborn, and constant practice and exercise brought it to perfection. Wilson's father was a close and thoughtful student of style, and the son early imbibed his father's tendency. He studied style as an instrument in writing, he studied it even more in vocal expression and he always looked upon oratory as the most effective means of influencing and controlling men. As Mr. Baker said of him: 'He delights in words: in exact expression. Words are beautiful to him; and he is fond of new words which more clearly express the content of his ideas.' [17]

At the same time Wilson was careful to avoid the errors and the attitude of the mere rhetorician. What counted above all was thoughts. Words were merely the vehicle and of little or no account without the profound and powerful working of the mind beneath them. Or rather, the words and the thoughts were so inextricably and beautifully mingled that in using the one you were naturally and almost inevitably developing the other: 'You must immerse your phrase in your thought, your thought in your phrase, till each became saturated with the other.' [18] And it is probable that in this connection Wilson would have liked to think that his admirable characterization of Burke was appropriate to himself: 'His powers are all of a piece; his

heart is mixed up with his mind; his opinions are immediately transmuted into convictions; he does not talk for distinction, because he does not use his mind for the mere intellectual pleasure of it, but because he also deeply feels what he thinks.' [19]

On this literary basis Wilson produced a very considerable amount of printed matter which hardly receives enough attention in view of his greater political prominence. His American History and his Washington are rather in the nature of pot-boiling, but the earlier critical and biographical essays and the political writing of all periods are notable and original work. It is true that William Bayard Hale, who was first Wilson's enthusiastic biographer and later, after the development of war bitterness, his harshest critic, has little trouble in pointing out and ridiculing defects of style. But as Professor Perry justly remarks, no author could stand against such minute and malignant scrutiny. One smiles to think what would be left of Shakespeare if subjected to it. And the fact remains that Wilson was a master of the English language, both written and spoken.

To return to some further elements of his intellectual equipment. One asks oneself how far he was subject to prejudice, to those unreasoning movements of the spirit which are always the greatest enemies of intellectual power. He admits that he was not free from such things. But he at least believed that he was willing and anxious to subject such prejudices to the test of argument, and it

seemed to him that he kept an open mind and welcomed objection and clear-cut presentation of an opposing point of view. Others do not always agree with him about this: 'In argument he was fluent and resourceful, though not always logical. The rough and tumble of a give and take discussion annoyed and easily disconcerted him.' [20] On the other hand, one of his closest friends, Robert Bridges, insists that he got immense fun out of discussion as a pure game: 'He always wanted to put his mind alongside of yours; the exercise of the faculty of intelligent debate and discussion was of infinite variety and joy to him. I never knew but one other man who got so much fun out of the exercise of his faculties.' [21]

However his convictions were arrived at, there is universal agreement that, once set, they were extraordinarily fixed and unchangeable. Having gone through his intellectual processes to the end, the man was certain he was right and all his physical and spiritual energy must be directed to carrying his conclusions into effect. It is true that at times he emphasizes the necessity of adapting oneself to changing circumstances. But the rock-like persistence of the convictions seems to be the thing that stands out with most of his associates and will be likely to stand out in history.

As to the special manifestations of the intellect in varied forms of application, what mainly strikes one, at any rate if one comes as I do from the minute study of Roosevelt, is the lack of versatility.

Wilson's intellectual world was narrow from the beginning to the end. He had little command of languages, was strangely ignorant of the general great literature of the world. To science, which interested Roosevelt so immensely, he was quite indifferent, and indeed resented its intrusion into the more speculative and emotional fields. For abstract philosophy he cared little and his knowledge of it was slight. Even in religion his interest was not intellectual but practical. He imbibed and retained a vivid and animating orthodoxy, carrying it into a sure practical belief in divine interposition in the affairs of this world and an individual survival in the future. He maintained and proclaimed these beliefs at all times. He even had such queer minor quirks of superstition as his whimsical clinging to the number thirteen, which he thought peculiarly propitious to himself. But in all these matters he rather avoided discussion and intellectual probing and was satisfied with the practical application.

Even in the fields which might be thought peculiarly his own his information was singularly limited. He by no means kept up with the modern movement of political economy. His acquaintance with history in no way approached the broad familiarity with different epochs and nations which is so notable in Roosevelt. Only in the detailed analysis of the working of government was Wilson thoroughly and minutely at home. This was his natural field. This seemed to him the proper, the predominant, the engrossing preoccupation for human powers.

At any rate he gave to it all the powers he possessed. Yet even here his thinking seems to me greater in extension than in intension. He did not go to the very bottom of things in the science of government any more than in the science of mind. His intellect was not profoundly penetrative or creative. Nor did he have what I call the passion of thought. Mental processes did not tear him and wrench him as they did Lucretius or Spinoza. What did characterize him as a creature of brains was an enormous and constant intellectual activity. He was always thinking, always fertilely, ingeniously designing and contriving new mental processes leading to new practical ends. It was the working of this activity which distinguished Wilson among contemporary statesmen and which makes the study of him so interesting.

III

But all this emphasis on brains must not be understood to imply that Wilson was lacking in nerves and sensibility. On the contrary, he was quite as well provided with these things as the average person. It was only that the brain activity was in excess and produces the greater impression. He himself repeatedly insists that after all it is the emotions that count: 'I want to remind you that we are governed by our emotions very much more than we are governed by our reason.' [22] He was sometimes annoyed and exasperated by the charge of emotional deficiency: 'So far as I can make it out,

I was expected to be a perfect bloodless thinking machine; whereas I am perfectly aware that I have in me all the insurgent elements of the human race. I am sometimes by reason of long Scotch tradition able to keep those instincts in restraint.' [23] And he goes out of his way to proclaim the fires of emotional experience that burn him up: 'If I were to interpret myself, I would say that my constant embarrassment is to restrain the emotions that are inside of me. You may not believe it, but I sometimes feel like a fire from a far from extinct volcano, and if the lava does not seem to spill over it is because you are not high enough to see the caldron boil.' [24] Yet all the time note just the suggestion of intellectual arrogance which the last sentence implies.

If the nerves appeared in no other way, the constant strain of ill health would tend to foster and develop them. Wilson was all his life physically delicate. There are hints of unrevealed maladies which persecuted him. At any rate, he had repeated nervous breakdowns and at all times he was more or less a martyr to indigestion and to the remedies he employed to meet it. Nerves so stretched and tormented would be expected to be frequently unstrung. It does not seem, however, that the general melancholy and depression, so often associated with such physical conditions, were especially present in this case. There was sometimes definite discouragement. There was often the burning discontent which is the greatest spur to

progress. There does not seem to have been the vague sense of the hollowness of life and the worthlessness of effort which are apt to be the plague of nerves and brain working together. Perhaps the absence of these things was partly due to a superb and watchfully cultivated intellectual control, which shows in the ability to put aside the most colossal cares in the world and sleep whenever the chance came: 'I am not often subject to the dominion of my nerves, and it requires only a very little prudence to enable me to maintain that mastery over myself and that free spirit of courageous, light-hearted work in which I pride myself.' [25]

It is of course with any individual impossible to measure exactly the nice balance of nerves and intellect in the great emotional experiences, but still it seems to me that in the two greatest of all, love and religion, the overswaying element in Wilson's case was intellectual. He loved intensely, he felt the power and the presence of God intensely. Yet the feeling is always interpenetrated with an intellectual, analytical clarity, as appears in the following passage: 'You have loved some person very dearly. You have tried to merge your individuality with that person and you have never succeeded. There is no person linked spiritually so close to you that you can share his individuality and he can share yours.' [26] Doubtless this is the experience of all love, but only the preponderating intelligence dissects it so remorselessly.

Take the minor aspect of nerves, temper. Wilson had a quick, fierce temper. Read Mr. Thompson's account of the outbreak against an impudent camera man in Bermuda. [27] But the temper was restrained and held down with an almost superhuman control, and there is constant testimony to his gentleness and courtesy even when worn out by public and private distress. Take again the aspect of pity and sympathy and sensitiveness to suffering. Among many illustrations there is the story of the woman who appealed to the President of Princeton to reinstate her erring son. She was on the eve of an operation, she said, and her life might depend on the President's clemency. 'Madam,' was the quiet answer, 'as between your life and that of Princeton — the institution — it is better that you should die; for Princeton must live.' [28] And he refused, but he was almost prostrated afterwards. The nerves and the intellect also appeared in the same nice adjustment in money matters. It would seem that Wilson was always generous by impulse and ready to give where he had anything to give. But he had a Scotch canniness and thrift and the pestilent plague of his early career was the clinging bane of poverty. This shows in Mrs. Wilson's gentle, half-humorous complaint: 'How I hope all this "limelight" will make that new edition sell enormously. It is very inconvenient for a public man to be penniless.' [29] The strain of narrow circumstances came hardest on the wife, however. For Wilson himself was helped by his stoical in-

difference to luxury. He did not care for costly food, and if he did, he had not the stomach to eat it. Elaborate dressing and expensive, elegant appointments meant little to him: he could do without them.

So with amusements. In early life he took a certain interest in sports, but it was the brain interest not the hand, and when he is connected with baseball or football, it is rather as the manager or the coach than as a star player. He liked to plan and organize and let others act. In later life he played golf — for his health.

Again, with all æsthetic concerns. Mrs. Wilson practiced and loved painting and tried to initiate her husband, but his mind turned in other directions and he deplores it: 'It has been one of the few grave misfortunes of my life that I have hitherto *known* least of the two things that move me most, poetry and painting. My sensibilities in those directions seem to me like a musical instrument seldom touched, like a harp disused.' [30] And so they largely remained to the end. He liked the outdoor world but mainly as exercise and diversion. He read certain poets over and over and especially enjoyed reading them to his friends; but his equipment in this line was astonishingly limited for a man who loved words and praised the benefits of literature so highly. He did like to sing and sang well, but even with music I find no indications of large acquaintance with the classical composers. He immensely enjoyed the theatre, in the earlier

days more serious Shakespearean acting, Booth and others, but in later time he turned more to the frivolous, the movies and vaudeville shows, to which he was devoted to the end. Very characteristic is his own analysis of the use of such things: 'There are blessed intervals when I forget by one means or another that I am President of the United States. One means by which I forget is to get a rattling good detective story, get after some imaginary offender and chase him all over — preferably over any continent but this, because the various parts of this continent are becoming painfully suggestive to me.' [31] And here obviously we have brains seeking oblivion by the most immediate and swiftly efficient means.

IV

The most important aspect of nerves is in relation to men and women. When it comes to politics, the tangle of brains and nerves is apt to be conspicuous in Wilson's case, but in ordinary life his human relations mainly involved ordinary feeling. As regards human beings at large and taken in the mass he had at any rate an unfailing curiosity and interest, though it does not seem as if he ever quite touched them or quite loved them. With his remarkable gift of elucidation he makes the curiosity and interest singularly effective. There is the striking passage of the railroad station: 'I cannot sit in a railroad station comfortably because men will come in whom I want to kick out and persons

will come in whom I want to go up and speak to and make friends with and I am restrained because when I was small I was told that was not good form and I would not for the world be unlike my fellow-men.' [32] And again there is his yearning complaint of the irksome limitations of his exalted position: 'I like human beings. It is a pretty poor crowd that does not interest you... a crowd picked up off the street is just a jolly lot — a job lot of human beings, pulsating with life, with all kinds of passions and desires. It would be a great pleasure if unobserved and unattended I could be knocked around as I have been accustomed to being knocked around all my life.... I have sometimes thought of going to some costumers... and buying an assortment of beards, rouge, and coloring and all the known means of disguising myself, if it were not against the law.' [33]

In ordinary social intercourse Wilson was shy, remote, and difficult. He himself admits it and others agree. Something of how extreme this was is suggested in Hale's anecdote of the attempted visit to a foreigner of distinction: 'The President of Princeton (as he was then) carried a letter of introduction to the foreign savant and went to his house to present it. Mr. Wilson's courage failed and he passed and repassed the house several times, and finally paused before it, but with trepidation so great that he could not ring the bell; the call was never made. It was not an exceptional case. "This," Mr. Wilson is quoted as saying reflectively,

"is why I know so few people I should like to have known."' [34] On the other hand, when the ice was once broken and the barriers down, the President's charm was unusual and almost unfailing. The ungraciousness of the harsh features and stiff manner were forgotten in the winning, sympathetic smile and especially in the vivid ease and insinuating grace of the varied and piquant speech. As Colonel House says: 'When one gets access to him there is no more charming man in all the world than Woodrow Wilson. I have never seen any one who did not leave his presence impressed. He could use this charm to enormous personal and public advantage if he would.' [35]

And under circumstances that were at all intimate the charm flowered into an astonishing and spontaneous gayety. There were jests of all sorts, there was an inexhaustible fund of entertaining stories, the Celtic strain asserting itself in all its magic freedom. Wilson was at one with Roosevelt in his love of Lewis Carroll. He was always quoting Alice in Wonderland and he relished nonsense verses and limericks, himself perpetrating many of them, as the sparkling

'For beauty I am not a star.
There are others more handsome by far.
But my face I don't mind it,
For I am behind it:
The man who's in front gets the jar.'

When, as Governor of New Jersey, he attended a

senatorial dinner, he astonished the legislators by singing darkey songs and joining Senator Frelinghuysen in a riotous Virginia reel.[36]

When it comes to intimate friendships with men, Wilson once more is delightfully human, though perhaps Mr. Baker in emphasizing this protests a little too much. Such relations as that with Robert Bridges were by no means unusual and where there was no question of politics they endured to the end. It appears that men who had once been near to him and appreciated him clung to him with an almost blind devotion and confidence. What is impressive in these matters of affection is Wilson's own almost desperate longing to have people love him. He resented being thought of and treated as inhuman: 'It is no compliment to me to have it said that I am a "great intellectual machine." Good Heavens, is there no more in me than that? I want people to love me — but I suppose they never will.' [37] Yet what strikes me most is that all the emphasis is on being loved not on loving. The truth is that these great people who do great things are too absorbed to waste much life on loving. And always there is the subtle disillusioning play of brain as Mr. Baker himself depicts it: 'He wanted love, but must do his own thinking. All his life he was trying to keep his emotions apart from his thoughts — his friendships apart from his convictions. He would love without reservations; he must think coldly. Few men can do that or understand it in others: much tragedy is

likely to flow from the attempt.' [38] Assuredly it did in Wilson's case.

As to minor yet immensely significant aspects of affection, for example the love of children and the love of animals, I find little evidence. Yet again there is the strange power of his penetrative analysis making you think he had affinities which perhaps he had not: 'There are two beings who assess character instinctively by looking into the eyes — dogs and children. If a dog not naturally possessed of the devil will not come to you after he has looked you in the face, you ought to go home and examine your conscience; and if a little child from any other reason than mere timidity will not come to your knee, go home and look deeper yet into your conscience.' [39]

But in this matter of human relations Wilson is most interesting in his dealings with women, though naturally one cannot probe them to the very bottom. He took to women, liked them socially and intellectually, poured out his heart to them, tried to think they understood him. For there is no more subtle and exquisite flattery than that of being — apparently — understood, even if all the while the cool brain stands by and assures you that no one has ever understood you or will ever understand you. The purring, sympathetic adulation of good and brilliant women was irresistible. There is nothing more bewitching than to have an agreeable woman discover that you are a genius — especially when you have already surmised it yourself. There-

fore Wilson wrote endless self-revealing letters to all sorts of ladies and this not unnaturally got him into trouble and filled Washington and the United States with utterly baseless scandal. Those of the letters to Mrs. Peck that have been published are as innocuous as they are intellectual and we are assured that the unpublished are no different.

Anyway, against these illicit complications Wilson was protected by his unswerving devotion to the wife whose incomparable tenderness and clear insight had gone so far to make him what he was. The reading of the letters printed by Mr. Baker shows how deep and lofty the devotion was and how persistent, and the testimony of Mrs. Wilson's brother and innumerable others proves the enduring beauty of the conjugal relation. Yet all the time, as in friendship, I am struck with a certain one-sidedness of that relation: 'It isn't pleasant or convenient to have strong passions.... I have the uncomfortable feeling that I am carrying a volcano about with me. My salvation is in being loved.... There surely never lived a man with whom love was a more critical matter than it is with me.' [40] Still, still being loved, not loving! Oh, the egotism of men — almost equal to the egotism of women! But loving or loved, the women, the first wife and the second wife, played an enormous part in Wilson's career, both the private and the political.

V

And politics, the government of men, for Wilson as for Roosevelt, was all that seriously counted in life. When he was sixteen, looking at the portrait of Gladstone, he said: 'That is Gladstone, the greatest statesman that ever lived. I intend to be a statesman too.' [41] Looking back from a later time, he said of his boyhood: 'I was born a politician and must be at the task for which by means of my historical writing I have all these years been in training.' [42] Even when it seemed that circumstances had cut him off from a political career, he looked to it with bitter regret: 'I do feel a very real regret that I have been shut out from my heart's *first* — primary — ambition and purpose, which was, to take an active, if possible a leading part in public life, and strike out for myself, if I had the ability, a *statesman's* career.' [43] And he proclaimed to his Princeton students: 'We are not put into this world to sit still and know; we are put into it to act.' [44]

Then when he was fifty-three years old and actual politics seemed completely out of his range, he was thrust into the thick of them partly by his success at Princeton and partly by his failure. It was his original, independent grasp of the educational problem that attracted the attention of the country, and if he had been able to carry through his educational and social program at Princeton, it is doubtful whether he would have risked such prospects for the extremely dubious venture of the

governorship of New Jersey in 1910. But from that turning-point politics was the whole of him.

And first it is necessary to establish squarely the lofty ideal aims of Wilson's political life. To any one who has followed him at all closely the slurs of Roosevelt, 'he is astute and conscienceless,' [45] 'his lack of all convictions and willingness to follow every opinion,' [46] are merely ridiculous. Wilson's aims may often have been unrealizable, but if so, it was because of their loftiness. He wanted to govern, but it was because he saw the superb possibilities of government and fully appreciated the lamentable defects which had hitherto kept those possibilities unattained. He was not mad enough to say that he could remedy the defects, but he was man enough to say that he would give his brain and his whole soul and his very life to trying. Men had claimed too much for Democracy. They had dallied with Democracy and professed to have put it to the proof and found it a failure and they were beginning to laugh at it and throw it aside. He believed that Democracy, for all its failures and defects, held the future of the world, as Lincoln believed it. He believed that Democracy, rightly guided and interpreted, even perhaps through the dazzling conception of a world unity, held the only possible hope of the future, and he was ready to give all that was in him in every way to the attempt to realize that hope.

Nor was Wilson by any means a mere dreaming idealist. He had fixed and definite and largely

elaborated theories as to how the ideal should become a reality. Even as a boy he was an organizer and all through his career he was inclined to make systematic plans and frame constitutions of one kind or another. His first and perhaps his best book, 'Congressional Government,' was an analytical study of the shortcomings of legislative administration in the United States, and from that point to the conception of the Covenant of the League he was always busy with governmental ideas, the weakness being that he was inclined to leap at once to larger outlines and to some extent disregard the patient working out of details. But always the theory of government was his passion.

Also, it is interesting to see how with all his intellectual preoccupations, he did not have the intellectual's dread of decision and responsibility. When he had made up his mind and saw his way, he wanted to go right ahead and act, or thought he did and insisted that he did. When he had made a critical decision, he never wasted time sighing over the consequences, but accepted the burden and forgot it, except as it affected the future. In theory he abhorred a moral coward, one who hesitates and palters and shifts in the face of sudden emergency. When the moment of trial comes, intellectual caution should be flung to the winds; and he spurns men 'who are dried up at the source by the enemy of mankind which we call Caution. God save a free country from cautious men.... Caution is the confidential agent of selfishness.' [47]

Yet in spite of all this free vigor of theory, the old lurking, critical, hesitating intellect could not be altogether escaped and as you follow Wilson's political course, you cannot help feeling the defects as well as the qualities of brains. How they stand out in a confession like the following. To think of all who are looking to him, he says 'makes me tremble not only with a sense of my own inadequacy and weakness, but as if I were shaken by the very things that are shaking them and if I seem circumspect, it is because I am so diligently trying not to make colossal blunders. If you just calculate the number of blunders a fellow can make in twenty-four hours if he is not careful and if he does not listen more than he talks, you would see something of the feeling I have.' [48] Cannot you watch the brains working, working through it all? It was this that caused the delay and the apparent uncertainty in the dealing with Mexico and in the even more critical dealing with the Great War. It may have been wise policy, it may have been debating inefficiency. It unquestionably was the action of intellect rather than will, and it not only irritated his enemies but provoked dubious comment from his faithful supporters, so that even Colonel House murmurs, 'The trouble with the President is that he does not move, at times, with sufficient celerity,' [49] and one of the most judicious members of the Cabinet, Franklin K. Lane, cries, almost in despair, 'We have had to push and push and push to get him to take any forward step.... He comes out

right, but he is slower than a glacier and things are mighty disagreeable when anything has to be done.' [50]

Which brings us to the supreme problem of politics, at any rate for a temperament like Wilson's, the problem of dealing with human beings. He wanted to rule men, to work for their good, to manage them, but somehow he never had quite the tact or the touch to enable him to do it. As regards the general mass of mankind, taken individually, we have already seen something of his attitude in his social relations. He was intensely curious about men and women, he wanted to understand their motives, their tastes, their habits, their traditions: 'The whole problem of life is to understand one another.' [51] Yet something held him off from them. It was partly perhaps the nice distinction that he makes in speaking of Jefferson: 'Mr. Jefferson was only a patron of the people; appealed to the rank and file, believed in them, but shared neither their tastes nor their passions.' [52] And elsewhere he admits that Jefferson's attitude was largely his own. Also there was something of the intellectualist's contempt for the ignorant prejudice and offhand bravado of the crowd. As one not unfriendly observer says of him: 'He mostly saw man the individual in his littleness and was intolerant, impatient, and disgusted with him.... He wanted to speak for the common crowd, but in private he frequently found it difficult to tolerate them. "He has a bungalow mind," was a favorite description.

"I sometimes wish they were not so damned honest and just had a little brains."' [53]

On the other hand, when it came to the masses collectively, he had immense, magnificent power over them by his gift of eloquence, could sway them hither and thither as he chose. Here also, as I pass from his earlier speeches, with their simple, sincere, scholarly earnestness, to the later political oratory, I feel a certain descent, as of a man who was striving to put his thoughts into a dialect unfamiliar and somewhat distasteful. But in spite of this, he got magnificent effects and effect. From his boyhood he loved oratory and practiced it, appreciated its defects and dangers but also its incomparable magic.

And the outcome of his pains and study was the crystallizing of those tremendous phrases, some of which, like the 'too proud to fight,' went far to ruin him, while others, like 'making the world safe for Democracy,' echoed and resounded with a strange animating glory in the ears of millions of weary and war-worn men and women. Somebody has said that Wilson's phrases did more to win the war than anything else. At any rate, borne on the swelling tide of them and the superb ideals they embodied, he went to Europe against the advice of his wisest counsellors, and achieved a triumphal progress such as has perhaps never come to any one man before. Alas, that it should have been possible to say, even with rhetorical exaggeration, that when he went to Europe he was the greatest man

that ever lived, and when he returned he did not have a friend.

For when it came to handling men as individual co-workers, Wilson's weaknesses became apparent. He wanted to get near them, to conciliate them, to work with them, above all to understand them. But something in his make-up made the contact difficult, if not impossible. His heart was approachable, his head was not. As a group of indignant Democratic followers said to a curious, inquiring Republican, 'we never get near him — no more than you — he holds us at arm's length.' [54] Still, still there was the cold, solitary intellect, shrinking into itself and bent upon working out its own processes in its own way.

The most striking element in this matter of Wilson's dealing with individuals is the long, profoundly tragic series of wrecked friendships that he left scattered behind him in his political career — West and Hibben at Princeton, Harvey, Garrison, Page, Lansing, and finally even the long-suffering Tumulty and Colonel House. In every single case no doubt Wilson had his good reasons. In every single case no doubt he had to choose between a principle and a friend, and the friend had to go. But it makes a record that is not pleasant to look over and one is reminded of the harsh criticism on Sainte-Beuve, that he deserted all his friends in the name of truth and in the end truth deserted him. Wilson would certainly never have admitted anything of the kind for himself, but at any rate he did

not conform to the saying of a very wise person, that the law of love is higher than the law of truth.

Another significant and closely connected point in Wilson's human political relations is the constant drift to inferiors. His apologists deny this. They say that he readily consulted experts. He did, in their special lines, as in his admirable turning over of the entire military management to Pershing. Moreover, he sought information from many sources until his mind was made up. But the fact remains, that he instinctively surrounded himself with men who were his intellectual inferiors, who looked up to him and flattered him. It is true, he insisted that he was not under the influence of any one. But all men are influenced, and when your inferiors are closest to you, it is they who do the influencing. If you read Tumulty's book, you see what Tumulty was, and you also see how Wilson turned to him. The same is true of Lansing and of Daniels, and the Commission that Wilson took with him to Paris forms the harshest of all comments on him in this regard. To be sure, there is Colonel House, perhaps the most extraordinary figure in all the extraordinary aggregation, and who will venture to call Colonel House, that curious, subtle, flexible, insinuating, dominating spirit, inferior to any one? Yet in his extreme submission and loving devotion to his chief, Colonel House's influence was perhaps much of the same nature in its working as that of the others.

Then when Wilson emerged from this unwhole-

some atmosphere of comparative inferiority, when he came into bitter life and death conflict with those who were his equals or superiors, not perhaps in character, certainly not in ideals, but in energy, in resource, above all in political experience and political unscrupulousness, with the Wests at Princeton, with Lloyd George and Clemenceau at Paris, with Cabot Lodge at Washington, he was beaten, not in his ideals, but in his effort to put the ideals into effect.

VI

So we have considered the man's political career externally. Now let us turn to the lining of it, as it were, to his own view of that career and of himself. It is evident that there was a clear, persistent force of ambition guiding him from the beginning, and as to the nature and extent of such ambition he has words as illuminating as his words always are. Of the significance of ambition in general, of its larger purport, he says: 'It is for this reason that men are in love with power and greatness: it affords them so pleasurable an expansion of faculty, so large a run for their minds, an exercise of spirit so varied and refreshing.' [55] And even in early years he analyzed clearly and subtly the working of this passion in himself: 'Those indistinct plans of which we used to talk grow on me daily, until a sort of calm confidence of great things to be accomplished has come over me which I am puzzled to analyze the nature of. I can't tell whether it is a

meré figment of my own inordinate vanity, or a deep-rooted determination which it will be within my power to act up to.' [56]

In the formative period the ambition was naturally vaguer and more indeterminate in its character. It never seems to have taken any legal aspect, though law was his chosen profession. But before he came to controlling men directly, he cherished the desire to influence them by written words, gave the closest attention to all the secrets of style and the use of them to make an enduring impression on the world: 'I wish I could believe that I had inherited that rarest gift of making great truths attractive in the telling and of inspiring with great purposes by sheer force of eloquence or by gentle stress of persuasion.' [57] Yet it does not appear that the ambition was ever purely literary in form, there was no mastering desire to produce imaginative beauty for its own satisfying excellence.

To the literary ambition succeeded the academic, or the two went hand in hand. But here again the passion was not for pure scholarship, but rather to use learning as well as literary gift to arouse and stimulate his fellow-men: 'I have no patience for the tedious toil of what is known as "research"; I should be complete if I could inspire a great movement of opinion, if I could read the experiences of the past into the practical life of the men of to-day and communicate the thought to the minds of the great mass of the people so as to impel them to great political achievements.' [58]

Yet neither in writing books nor in teaching lay the real field of this eager, ardent spirit. Almost from childhood, as we have already seen, he burned to have a hand in the ruling of men, as he early wrote to a friend, 'to mould the world as our hands might please.' [59] As the years ran on, he became more secure, more hopeful of the possibilities in this line: 'I seem to myself to have become... more confident, steady, serene — enjoying in a certain degree a sense of power — as if I had gotten some way upon the road I used so to burn to travel — and yet fairly restless and impatient with ambition, as of old.' [60] And in his discontent with the academic routine he murmured to his brother-in-law: 'I am so tired of a merely talking profession. I want to *do* something.' [61]

Then he got the chance to do something with a vengeance. What man in the world ever had a bigger? And can it be doubted that he thoroughly enjoyed it, enjoyed the prominence, enjoyed the distinction, enjoyed the publicity? Mr. Baker says, no doubt justly, that he had never the habit, so marked in Roosevelt, of dramatizing his own doings. Yet over and over and over you have the sense of his rich appreciation of standing where he did: 'From the messages I get I realize that I am regarded as the foremost leader of liberal thought in the world.' [62] Do you suppose that the obscure writer, the humble teacher, did not relish that position to the full?

The relish was all the keener from his perfect

understanding and vivid memory of the struggles he had had to go through, of the difficulties he had encountered in getting where he was. Take such moments as that when he seemed to have lost the nomination in 1912 and said to his sympathizing wife: 'My dear, of course I am disappointed, but we must not complain. We must be sportsmen.' [63] Crises like that bring out the burning essence of a whole life. The same alternations of triumph and failure appear in his confession to Colonel House: 'I spoke of his success, and he said his Princeton experience hung over him sometimes like a nightmare; that he had wonderful success there, and all at once conditions changed and the troubles, of which every one knew, were brought about. He seemed to fear that such a dénouement might occur again.' [64]

Yet with all the ups and downs there seems to be less of discouragement and depression than might have been expected. Such moments will come, in one form or another: 'Complete success, such as I have had at the Hopkins, has the odd effect upon me of humiliating rather than exalting me; for I can't help knowing how much less worthy and capable I am than I am thought to be.' [65] But in the main there is the stern, firm, unshakable persistence which comes with a gaze forever fixed upon a remote object that must and will be attained.

Something the same grit and vigor show in the attitude towards criticism. Wilson did not like it, but he endured it grimly. The curious point in this

regard is the working of the intellectual temperament. His friends insist that he did not bring in the personal side, was thinking only and always of the truth and the right. But precisely because he was so absolutely convinced that he was right, it came to seem to him that those who criticized and opposed him were actuated not by conviction but by malevolence, and the very loftiness and earnestness of his ideals infused a peculiar element of bitterness into his personal animosities.

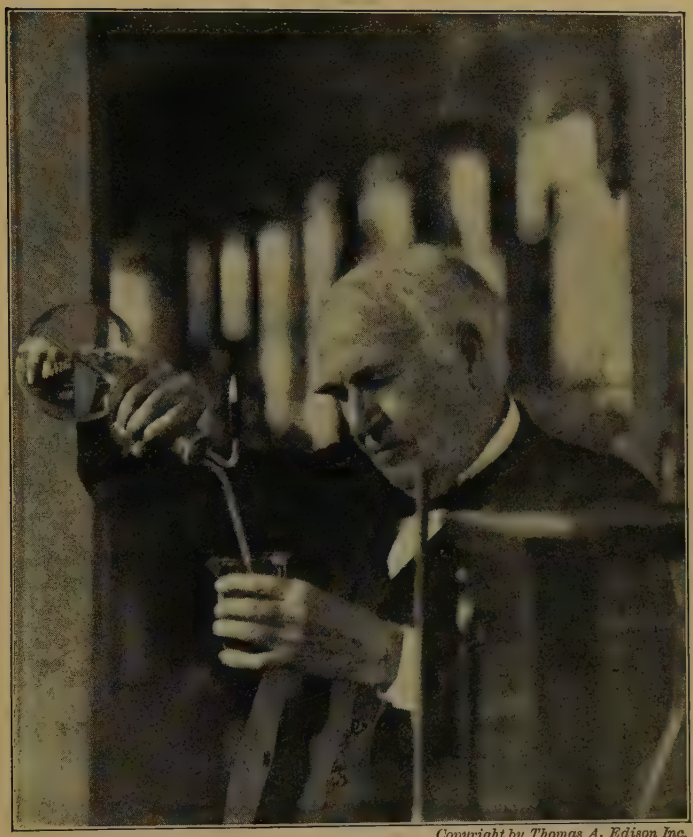
Thus out of such a strange tangle of ambitions and ideals sprang this extraordinary and almost unparalleled career, a career in which triumph after triumph seemed only to lead in the end to tragic defeat, so that one realizes the direct significance of Wilson's words: 'A man may be defeated by his own secondary successes.' [66] But through the dreamlike quality of it all and through the complicated web of seething passions and thwarted aspirations there runs that lofty sweep of noble idealism which must never be forgotten and which shines in Wilson's own words of the very last years: 'I would rather fail in a cause that I know some day will triumph than to win in a cause that I know some day will fail.' [67] Yet even here how eminently characteristic is the reiterated *I know.* He knew, he knew, he always knew, for he was a creature of brains.

III
LET THERE BE LIGHT
THOMAS ALVA EDISON

CHRONOLOGY

THOMAS ALVA EDISON.

Born, Milan, Ohio, February 11, 1847.
At twelve years, newsboy on Grand Trunk Railroad.
Married Mary G. Stillwell, 1873.
Established workshop at Menlo Park, New Jersey, 1876.
Married Mina M. Miller, 1886.
Established workshop at West Orange, New Jersey, 1887.
Career of widely varied usefulness still unfinished.



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EDISON IN HIS LABORATORY

III

LET THERE BE LIGHT

THOMAS ALVA EDISON

I

When we look back at the nineteenth century, we realize that, whatever its defects, it was extraordinarily rich in developing certain forces which modified enormously at any rate the material, superficial existence of mankind. There is democracy, which was to make over the political world and accomplished something, if not all it hoped. There is journalism. When we compare the newspaper of a hundred years ago with that of today, we appreciate the immense subtle influence that has been exerted on every phase of human affairs. Most important of all these forces, perhaps, is that of mechanical invention, and steam and electricity, with all the innumerable minor developments involved in them, have produced an incredible change in the speed, the facility, may we also say the felicity, of life? Assuredly no name is more significantly and enduringly connected with this matter of invention than that of Thomas Alva Edison.

Edison was born in Ohio in 1847. His parents were comfortably off, and if he had little formal education, it was not from lack of means, but because his mother, who had been well educated her-

self, felt that she could give his peculiar temperament better training than he could get in the schools. From a boy he earned his living, and always his intensely active spirit was looking and toiling for ingenious ways to better himself. After varied wandering over the country and working in telegraphy and other things, he appeared in Boston, then in New York. Everywhere he invented useful appliances to help his work and gradually these appliances came to commercial profit. But all the money he could get went into the further experiment which was his life. He established laboratories at Menlo Park, then at Edison, then at Orange, and out of them came the marvelous discoveries of quadruplex telegraphy, the commercial adaptation of the telephone, the incandescent light, the storage battery, the phonograph, the development of the moving and talking pictures, and literally thousands of others, culminating in the variety of devices brought out by the inventor's service to the Navy Department during the War. At eighty-three Edison is still as intensely active as ever, and when it was proposed to relieve him of deafness, he is reported to have declined, saying that his infirmity helped him to think, and 'I want to do a lot more thinking before I die.'

The survey of this vastly fertile and productive career prompts some inquiry into the source of the production. What makes, enables one man to see such limitless possibilities in the adaptation of ordinary daily things, when another man will pass

them by quite unregarded? Edison himself is inclined to reject and scout the idea of any special gift, instinct, or genius. In his own homely phrase, genius is 'one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration.' [1] Hard work is the only solid basis of success, though men are infinitely cunning in the effort to seek other explanations. Yet you cannot help feeling that there goes a little more to it, and one who is himself totally without the mechanical instinct, though otherwise perhaps not wholly indolent, cannot but wonder at the ceaseless ingenuity which is forever discovering new relations in circumstances that have been old and obvious for a thousand years.

At the same time Edison's emphasis on a constant, unwearied, never-failing intellectual activity and ardor is no doubt perfectly just and such activity is the essential prerequisite of pretty much all the great accomplishment of the world. Mr. Firestone quotes the inventor as saying habitually, 'There is no expedient to which a man will not go to avoid the real labor of thinking.' [2] There are few of us who cannot confirm the remark from our own actual experience. A fierce intellectual activity seems to be Edison's dominant characteristic. His mind has got to be at work, conceiving something, creating something, getting somewhere, or he cannot be happy. When he was asked what makes him work, he said: 'I like it. I don't know any other reason. You know, some people like to collect stamps. Anything I have begun is always

on my mind and I am not easy while away from it until it is finished. And then I hate it.' [3]

With the natural drift towards ingenuity and the perpetual mental movement, there is also the impelling force of ambition. When Edison was asked, what frame of mind helps to bring ideas, he answered, 'the ambitious.' [4] No doubt he disclaimed and rejected the cheaper forms of publicity and notoriety; but neither he nor any one else is indifferent to the glory of achieving great things and being known to have achieved them. The interesting modification and development of all these spiritual incentives in Edison's case is their strongly and constantly practical bent. His democratic and thoroughly American training and surroundings made him look at life from the point of view of use and from first to last all his magnificent intellectual powers and gifts were bent to devices and appliances which should be directly advantageous for the convenience and comfort of humanity.

This tendency appears and develops from the very start. When he began as a newsboy on the train, he was not contented with merely selling papers. He soon printed a little paper of his own, and more than that, he was full of ingenious schemes for getting his papers sold. He dabbled in chemistry, that fascinating cosmos of experiment, from a child, and filled the house with bottles marked 'poison,' as later he was to fill his laboratory with pretty much every substance known in the world. Whether it was telegraphy, whether it

was electricity, whether it was the crushing of iron ore, or the manufacture of cement, or the eternalizing of perishable human voices, it made little difference: there was always something for Thomas A. Edison to discover or to improve, some clever turn of a device, some larger possibility of advantage or usefulness, which others had passed without seeing it, and he could seize and grasp and profit by. This restless spirit of ameliorating life is admirably indicated by Edison's biographers: 'The world never saw a man more deeply and desperately convinced that nothing in it approaches perfection.' [5]

II

Thus, through all sorts of varied vicissitudes and nomadic wandering Edison gradually settled into a career of professional invention, of the determined, ceaseless discovery of useful appliances to amplify the comfort of human life.

If it cannot be said that the mental activity has increased, since it was furious from the beginning, it has at least been disciplined, trained, and developed, so that it can be always directed to the greatest usefulness. As Mr. Firestone says: 'Mr. Edison's whole life has been devoted to training his mind to concentrated thinking.... He has so trained his mind that it shuts out everything excepting the specific problem before him.' [6] When he sets himself a particular task to work at, he begins by acquainting himself with all the material bearing upon it. In his own words: 'The first thing is to

find out everything everybody else knows and begin where they leave off.' [7] If he wants to investigate rubber, he sends for every available book and pamphlet on rubber. Then he goes through them all, not only with an incredible thoroughness but with an incredible rapidity of research. He seems to have the power of absorbing the printed page almost by glancing at it. He has at any rate the invaluable gift of getting just what he wants from a book and nothing else. When the material is stored away, he never loses it. His memory is both capacious and retentive.

And the research is supplemented by endless, inexhaustible, ever-varied experiment. There are those whose minds are immensely active, but the activity does not extend to their fingers, which are dull and wooden and inert. Not so Edison. He is not only always thinking things, he is always trying them, practically. Whenever his fertile imagination suggests a mechanical possibility, he wants to see how it will work. The accounts of his vast habit of experimenting are almost unbelievable. When he has some end to attain, he keeps at it, day after day, year after year, always varying his approach, pushing, thrusting, delving ever deeper and more subtly, into the curious secrets which nature seems to have placed a little beyond his reach. His resource and originality in all this seem to be astonishing. Even when an experiment is hopelessly unpromising, he will work it out: 'He will undertake elaborate experiments and conduct them

with great care... although his reason points to their utter futility. It is this trait, however, which led him into lines of original discovery and observation unattended by others.' [8] It is said that there are hundreds of note-books preserved in the laboratory recording the history of all this experimenting and showing in some cases, as notably with the electric light, many thousands of efforts that led to no positive result whatever.

Obviously such vast work cannot be accomplished without an enduring habit of labor and a constitutional industry, and these traits in Edison are almost more impressive than even his original genius. Certainly, as we have seen, he himself is more inclined to emphasize the importance of them. From his earliest days he was a worker, worked perpetually at something, and if it was not precisely what he wanted to do, it might at least be work at something else. As his own motto puts it, 'Everything comes to him who hustles while he waits.' [9]

When you read the account of his working methods, it seems as if the most robust, magnificent health must be indispensable for them. It does not appear that in his youth he was especially vigorous; but either his moderate and abstemious habits of living, or his theory of the healthfulness of work without worry, seems to have profited him, and produced an almost iron physique, able to endure fatigue and strain which would shatter and ruin the constitutions of many men completely. There are varying statements about his times of working.

Probably it would never have been possible to gauge it very exactly. But he himself said in more advanced life: 'I do not work hard now. I come to the laboratory about 8 o'clock every day and go home to tea at 6, and then I study or work on some problem until 11, which is my hour for bed.... For fifteen years I have worked on an average 20 hours a day.' [10]

The most phenomenal thing about all this is the treatment of sleep. A good many men can do a vast deal of work if they can have their regular seven or eight hours' sleep in a comfortable bed at night. Edison laughs at any such luxury as this. 'Lack of sleep never hurt anybody,' he says.[11] If he can have four or five hours a night on an average, he can get along for months. When some particularly difficult problem has got possession of him, he has been known to go without sleep almost entirely for several days at a time. Then he will go to bed and sleep perhaps twenty or thirty hours, until the nervous equilibrium is completely restored. He not only sleeps any time, he sleeps anywhere. A comfortable bed seems to him a rather enervating luxury. When he feels the need of sleep, he drops down on a bench, or a desk, or a pile of books. 'He never suffers from insomnia, and has frequently taken his rest on a pile of sawdust or even a deal board.' [12] When he does sleep, he sleeps profoundly, with thorough refreshment, and it is extremely difficult to awaken him.

With this extraordinary capacity for labor goes

an equally impressive endowment of patience. The first requisite in accomplishing work like Edison's is to know how to wait. Nature never hurries, neither does Edison, though at times he may have a manifest immense desire to attain his end. The end can only be reached by letting things take their course, and no one knows this better than he. And not only must there be passive patience, there must be a tireless persistence. Nothing is more energetically emphasized and repeated by Edison than this quality of sticking to it: 'In working out an invention the most important quality is persistence. Nearly every man who develops a new idea works it up to a point where it looks impossible and then he gets discouraged. That's not the place to get discouraged, that's the place to get interested. Hard work and forever sticking to a thing until it's done are the main things an inventor needs.' [13]

It is just on this point of discouragement that Edison is perhaps most spiritually interesting. In such a prolonged career of experiment, of effort and trial of all sorts, there must have been, there have been, innumerable difficulties, obstacles, failures, mistakes. Long researches, faithfully and patiently pursued, over and over again lead to nothing. The wonder is in Edison's extraordinary enduring optimism through it all. His biographers find just one case of impatience in all his lengthy notebooks: 'Saturday 3:30 went home disgusted with incandescent lamps.' [14] In general the tone is that of disregarding failure altogether, or using it only as a

lesson of what to avoid in the future. As one of his assistants said: 'Edison can think of more ways of doing a thing than any man I ever saw or knew of. He tries everything and never lets up, even though failure is apparently staring him in the face. He only stops when he simply can't go any further on that particular line.' [15] Perhaps the most notable of his disappointments was in regard to the crushing of iron ore. After spending years and thousands over this, he found that other conditions had spoiled his market and the work and the investment had to be abandoned. Yet he saw it all go without a sigh and his only cheerful comment was: 'Well, it's all gone, but we had a hell of a good time spending it.' [16]

And if there was a constitutional disregard of failure, there was certainly a constitutional enjoyment and appreciation of success. After literally thousands of experiments, fruitless, balked, vain, and leading nowhere, to reach your aim, to come at last to the result that you had had in mind for years and that perhaps others had declared impossible — the triumph of it was immense and exquisite. And no doubt a certain element of the triumph was the public recognition. You may profess indifference to this. You may find publicity a nuisance and reporters a bore. We are told that Edison dislikes fuss and show, that he neglects honors and medals and is indifferent to printed laudation. Yet no man ever lived who could be wholly regardless of such praise as Edison receives, knowing well that he de-

serves it. But, however sweet the praise may be, there is no doubt more real ecstasy in the actual achievement. What a satisfaction, what an elation, breathes and gleams through such dry, veracious phrases of record as the following: 'Brought up lamp higher than a 16–c.p. 240 was ever brought before — Hurrah!' [17] And this shows still more in the assistant Batchelor's story of the final achievement of the incandescent light, after years of apparently fruitless effort: 'It was late in the afternoon before we had produced another carbon, which was again broken by a jeweller's screw-driver falling against it. But we turned back again, and before night the carbon was completed and inserted in the lamp. The bulb was exhausted of air and sealed, the current turned on, and the sight we had so long desired to see met our eyes.' [18] Those are moments in life that really count.

III

After all this record of practical experiment and absorption in it, it is interesting to consider Edison's relation to the larger lines of pure science, the love of scientific truth simply in and for itself, without any regard whatever to its bearing on practical utility. Edison himself has always disclaimed any standing as a pure, theoretical scientist. He makes no pretension to be classed with Newton and Faraday, as a discoverer of principles for the principles' sake. Also, it must be admitted that his intellectual training was always rather that of the practical

worker than that of the thinker along academic lines. He taught himself the things that he wanted to know, without bothering with things unessential, and as a result his mental equipment bears the marks of such self-training, the independence, the vigor, the originality, and perhaps also to some extent a trace of incoherence and wilfulness. The effects of the self-education show markedly in some of his larger theories about life in general and notably in his ideas about the education of others, for example in his use and suggestion of the questionnaire intelligence tests.

On the other hand, a very little conversance with Edison's mental habits and methods is sufficient to convince one that he was born with the essentials of the scientific spirit. He has the vast curiosity, the insatiable desire to get at facts, all the facts. When he was a boy, he set out to read the whole Detroit public library through and really did read part of it. Later, and even to-day, he reads everything he can get hold of, not only on his own subjects, but on subjects apparently very remote.

And he has the true scientist's love of theory, of the imaginative conception of possibilities, always shifting and varying in conformity with hard, observed fact: 'I always play my blue chips first. I try to think of the biggest thing I can do and then set about to do it.' [19] He has sometimes been accused of hit-or-miss experimenting, of arriving at his results by happy accident, and he resents the charge. In chemistry, he admits, his methods are

sométimes empirical, because chemistry is largely an empirical science; 'but when it comes to problems of a mechanical nature, I want to tell you that all I've ever tackled and solved have been done by hard logical thinking.' [20] Sometimes the final achievement may appear to come by a process of instinct or intuition, but in reality the instinct is based upon preliminary intellectual labor that is absolutely indispensable. Perhaps the most impressive illustration of this is Edison's own statement: 'I speak without exaggeration when I say that I have constructed three thousand different theories in connection with the electric light, each one of them reasonable and apparently likely to be true. Yet in two cases only did my experiments prove the truth of my theory.' [21]

And if the theorizing is eminently characteristic of the pure scientific spirit, surely the test of it by exact observation, by experiment, is equally so, and is just as characteristic of Edison. This balance, this mental reserve and control, are admirably suggested by Mr. Ford in his excellent study of Edison. 'Not the least among the many remarkable qualities of the Edison mind is its ability constantly to maintain a perspective. He never has any blind enthusiasms. An inventor frequently wastes his time and his money trying to extend his invention to uses for which it is not at all suited. Edison has never done this. He rides no hobbies. He views each thing that comes up as a problem to be solved in its own way.' [22] All the theories in

the world are worthless, and must be thrown over when they are touched by one little contrary fact. You must be willing to spend years in concocting them and perfecting them, and then be ready to toss them into the scrap-heap at a moment's notice. And Edison never hesitates to let facts dispose of theory in any way they will.

As I have recently been much occupied with the discussion and analysis of the great English scientist Charles Darwin, it is natural that a comparison between Darwin and Edison should suggest itself. One is first struck by the difference in their external circumstances. Darwin was an English gentleman, of the leisure class, with every advantage of birth, wealth, education, and social surroundings. Certainly nothing ever suggested to him that he should turn scientific speculation to practical advantage or commercial utility, for himself or any one else.

Yet underneath these superficial differences, there seems to be a remarkable resemblance in many particulars. Even in moral character the men are alike. There is the same sweet and genial human kindliness, the same large Christian understanding of the struggles and efforts and difficulties of others and allowance for their weaknesses and failures. Intellectually the resemblance is even greater. In Darwin, as in Edison, there is a fierce, constant, unfailing intellectual activity, an impulse to use every moment of existence for some fruitful purpose, and he cries out: 'A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value

of life.' [23] In Darwin, as in Edison, there is a perpetual imaginative play of theory in possible explanation of every observed fact. Yet all the time the facts are treasured and observed with the utmost reverence and the sense that the smallest fact is worth the vastest theory: 'I have steadily endeavored to keep my mind free so as to give up any hypothesis, however much beloved (and I cannot resist forming one on every subject), as soon as the facts are shown to be opposed to it.' [24] And Edison himself could not pursue experiment, in all its multiple forms, with more loving devotion, or more ever-varying and untiring ingenuity than Darwin pursued it.

The fundamental motive of Darwin's scientific effort was perhaps in part that ambition which Edison asserted to be the most fruitful source of creative ideas, but it was far more the lofty and haunting passion which Darwin indicates in his noble words: 'For myself I would, however, take higher ground, for I believe there exists, and I feel within me, an instinct for truth, or knowledge, or discovery, of something the same nature as the instinct of virtue and our having such an instinct is reason enough for scientific researches without any practical results ever ensuing from them.' [25]

Both these motives were certainly inherent and inborn in Thomas A. Edison as they were in Charles Darwin. The interesting thing for us is that Edison, by his birth, his training, his surroundings, was thoroughly a practical American, and all

his abstract scientific tendency was moulded and developed by this condition. An American boy, in moderate circumstances, with the absolute necessity of going out into the world and taking care of himself, all his intellectual activity, all his theoretical gift, all his intense instinct of practical experiment, were directed to doing things that would help him and then help others to get on in the world. Pure truth was immensely fascinating, but after all, was there such a thing as pure truth? Was not all the truth that counted mixed up in some way with human advantage or human disadvantage, and was it not his business to increase the advantage and diminish the disadvantage just as much as he could? It is the thorough Americanism in Edison and all that he has done that perhaps appeals to us most and there is admirable justice in the homely account of him given by one who had watched and studied him closely: 'A glutton for work, with a brain of almost inconceivable capacity for ideas, a simple, democratic old man who cares no more for show and ostentation than the simplest of us, he is typical of what we like to consider the ideal American.' [26]

IV

As with all these great men of action, there is a peculiar interest in noting here also the diversions and distractions from action, or the fact that there are few such diversions, if it is a fact. And Edison's life, like most of these lives of great achieving

effort, seems to have about as little distraction in it as any ever had. The one dominant passion controls, and nothing interferes with it, though he himself likes to emphasize a widespread interest in a great variety of things.

Æsthetically the range of curiosity does not seem to be very extensive. When he goes to Paris, he visits the museums. The modern painting in the Luxembourg he enjoys. As to the old masters he is as indifferent as Mark Twain: 'To my mind the Old Masters are not art, and I suspect that many others are of the same opinion; and that their value is in their scarcity.' [27] Music has a far greater attraction for him, which perhaps in part accounts for the zeal and enthusiasm with which he has developed the mechanical musical instruments. He seems to cherish a peculiar tenderness for the music of Beethoven and looked forward to a record of the Ninth Symphony as the highest pitch of mechanical perfection: 'No music appeals to Edison like that of Beethoven, and the very name of the composer will bring into his eyes an expression very much resembling adoration.' [28] The inventor is himself something of a performer on both violin and organ.

I cannot quite reconcile the adoration of Beethoven with Edison's taste in literature, which seems of a somewhat more elementary, Victorian order, and rests largely satisfied with Longfellow and Tennyson. The most curious thing, however, is his enthusiasm for Shakespeare, which is characteristically expressed: 'Ah, Shakespeare! That's

where you get the ideas. My, but that man did have ideas! He would have been an inventor, a wonderful inventor, if he had turned his mind to it. He seemed to see the inside of everything. Perfectly wonderful, how many things he could think about. His originality in the way of expressing things has never been approached.' [29] With which compare the comment to Burroughs, which shows the difficulty of disentangling the Shakespearean words from things: 'One morning Mr. Edison asked me if Shakespeare could be reproduced, without loss, in common everyday speech; if it could not, he evidently thought it so much against him.' [30] 'Evangeline,' Shakespeare as an inventor, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony make an æsthetic hodge-podge that puzzles me.

For the beauty of the natural world Edison seems to have always a deep and genuine sensibility, when he has time for it. Mrs. Edison tells us that he has a particular love for flowers and on their camping trips he was always bringing blossoms to Burroughs to name for him. But I like even better Burroughs's vivid hint of natural appreciation: 'Do you remember with what boyish delight he would throw up his arms when we suddenly came upon some particularly striking view?' [31]

There is no indication that even as a boy Edison had any great interest in sports or games proper as such. The great game of invention made all others seem tame and characterless. The somewhat pale diversion of parchesi is apparently the only thing of

the kind that much attracts him. As he became wealthy, he set up a billiard-table, and one day he challenged a friend to a game. Edison tried a difficult shot, and missed it. He set up the balls in the same position, tried again, and missed again. So for perhaps twenty times. Then he made the shot, but he took no further interest.[32] Something similar happened with fishing, to which he occasionally inclines, perhaps, like Horace Greeley, for the fun less than for the fish. He is apt to take his whole staff down the harbor for a day. On one excursion he fished two days steadily without getting a single bite, and it seemed that his persistence would never have given out, if his friends had not dragged him away.[33]

The story of human relations is not much more fruitful than that of sports. Edison has always been gentle, considerate, and devoted with his two wives and his numerous children, so far as invention will permit. Both the Mrs. Edisons appear to have appreciated that their first business in life was to let the invention have way, and the calling has been fulfilled with admirable tact and success. But I much relish the remark of the inventor to a persistent reporter, who asked his opinion about the modern girl: 'Don't ask me anything about women: I don't understand them.' Coming from a man who had read so deeply in Nature's infinite book of secrecy the comment is suggestive. Also, I do not like to pass the wedding-day anecdote. Edison energetically denies it, but even as legend

it has a profound characteristic significance. On that day the inventor was found by a friend working late in his laboratory over some impossible problem. The friend expressed sympathy but suggested that it might be time to go home. 'To be sure,' agreed Edison, 'I must go home: I was married to-day.' [34]

The truth is, that domestic care and comfort are about as little necessary to Edison as ever to any man. Eating and sleeping arrangements are of no importance to him, because he eats little and sleeps less. He sometimes enounces theories about food which sound like an epicure, but as a matter of fact he eats to live, to invent, and food is merely the fuel indispensable to keep invention actively at work. Strong cigars and black coffee are his only indulgences, and these he somewhat depends upon. Otherwise the pleasures of eating and drinking do not tempt. Nor does he care for other forms of luxury. As wealth came, he bought a handsome house and equipped it handsomely. But his life is not in the house, but in the laboratory, and he likes the old clothes and the easy ways that work and the laboratory suggest. John Burroughs records that on their camping trips Edison took more kindly to the out-of-door habits and the rough life than any one else: 'A good camper-out, he turns vagabond very easily, can go with hair disheveled and clothes unbrushed as long as the best of us, and rough it week in and week out and wear that benevolent smile.' [35]

Always in the human relations there is that smile, and it is suggestive of Edison's singular and undeniable personal charm. He does not seek social life for itself, he is too busy and too preoccupied. He shuns and hates the restraints and trammels, the tedious ordinary chatter, of mixed meetings of men and women. And when he is thoroughly absorbed by some perplexing problem, visitors sometimes find him difficult to approach and still more difficult to encounter when he has been approached. If you see him in these critical moments, you are most impressed by the concentrated look, and the intense suggestion of intellectual effort in the massive forehead and penetrating eyes. But when the strain is for the moment forgotten and thrown off, as it can be and sometimes is completely, there comes into the face a singular tenderness and human kindliness and mellowness, which every one recognizes. And when he is free in spirit, he loves to talk, and talks easily and well. He is said to be an admirable story-teller, loves jests and pranks of all sorts, even boyish ones, and exquisite fooling, and in the more serious exchange of thought you can always get what you want from him, if you yourself are worth while: 'In conversation Edison is direct, courteous, ready to discuss a topic with anybody worth talking to and in spite of his deafness an excellent listener. No one ever goes away from him in doubt as to what he thinks or means.' [36]

V

But naturally Edison's human relations in business, in his life pursuits, have been much more important than those cultivated merely for pleasure, since business has been the essence and the substance of his life. I consider first the human beings who influenced him intellectually, and I am surprised to note how small and insignificant the list appears to be. Something no doubt he owed to his father, and much more to his mother. The station-master Mackenzie, whose child's life he saved, taught him telegraphy, but really it hardly appears that any one else taught him anything. He seems from start to finish to have been extraordinarily self-dependent, quick to catch valuable hints of any kind, from anybody, but never at any time under great obligation to any intellectual guide or leader whatever.

The same thing appears to be true as to practical assistance. The man made his own way, from the time when he began to sell papers as a boy, and really required assistance from no one. Occasionally, a fellow-worker, like Milton Adams, lent him a hand. He turned to the big financiers, the Villards and Fisks and Goulds, for financial backing in his enterprises. But he did not always get it, and when he did get it, it did not work to his advantage. Altogether, there would seem to be few human beings who were less indebted to others for making their way in the world or for what they have accomplished.

Edison's relations with associates and fellow-workers, with those who were engaged in similar lines of effort, have the same manly and independent largeness. If he was under obligations to others, he acknowledged it. If he felt that they had anticipated him or were doing his work better, he admitted it freely. And the kind impersonal interest which he took in the labor of others well appears in the confession of a poor and struggling inventor: 'The keen interest, financial and moral, and friendly backing I received from Mr. Edison, together with valuable suggestions, enabled me to bring out the engine; as I was quite alone in the world — poor — I had found a friend who knew what he wanted and explained it clearly. Mr. Edison was a leader far ahead of the time.' [37]

In a career so long, so active, and so varied, it was unavoidable that there should be conflicts, competition, and even jealousies and rivalries. Others were working on lines parallel to Edison. With the thousands of patents that he was constantly trying to establish there was bound to be dispute, question, and controversy. Sometimes he was anticipated, sometimes he was imitated. There were some who belittled his results, some who simply stole them. Through all this complicated record it may be fairly said that Edison's spirit was tolerant and kindly. No doubt there were times of reasonable impatience, when the processes of law were cruelly slow and sometimes seemed stupidly unjust. One of his greatest admirers said of him:

'He occasionally used language somewhat removed from benediction; and what a glorious hater he can be on occasion.' [38] But in general he shows a Christian charity and human understanding not uncomparable to Darwin's, such a spirit as appears in his comment on one of the most unscrupulous and dishonest of his adversaries: 'It is of no practical use to mention the man's name. I believe he is dead, but he may have left a family.' [39]

The most interesting of Edison's human relations are of course with those who worked for him, the innumerable more or less humble assistants who toiled for years in his various laboratories and without whom he could not have achieved his astonishing results.

With all these workers the most notable thing seems to be what might be called the Edison spirit. One and all they seem to catch the tone of the place, to feel that they are vital elements of a great creative organization and to have an almost inspired zeal for doing their part in the general accomplishment.

This is no doubt largely a matter of original selection. Edison picks his men with thoughtful and discriminating care, as is indicated in the elaborate schedule of examination questions which was so widely heralded all over the country. He may set you first to the lowest manual tasks, to test your humility and aptitude for service. He may propose a complicated mechanical test, which may at once call out all your natural gift and equipment. But

the prime requisite is, are you willing to give all you have, to throw your time and your strength and your soul into the service, secure that no matter how heartily you do this, you have a leader who will surpass you.

When Edison has secured such service, there is no doubt but that he tasks it mightily, some say he overtasks it. There is a story that once when a problem was furiously difficult, Edison locked the doors and told his whole force they had got to stay there till the work was done, and they did. It has been said of him that he 'never hesitated to use men up as freely as a Napoleon or Grant.' [40] There must be no thought of hours, or rest, or relaxation, till the desired result was achieved. The master is not unjust, or from his point of view unreasonable. Natural stupidity he is patient with, though he gets rid of it as soon as possible. But mistakes of carelessness and shiftless oversight sometimes irritate him beyond bounds and 'call forth a storm of contemptuous expression that is calculated to make the offender feel cheap.' [41]

Yet everywhere and at all times, in these dealings with his men as in all else, you feel profoundly Edison's fundamental humanness, which is as rich as Darwin's. He may make enormous demands, but never upon others more than upon himself. He is thoroughly kindly, sympathetic, democratic, understanding, treats the men as fellows, as companions, in short as human beings, and what more can be said? One of his biographers speaks of seeing

him sitting on the corner of a table chatting and laughing with the office-boy, in perfect familiarity,[42] and it is this democratic spirit which in part accounts for the declaration of another biographer, that 'I doubt if there is a man living for whom his men would do as much.' [43]

VI

But a life of invention means dealing not only with human agents of all sorts but with money, which is often more difficult, disconcerting, and incalculable. You may discover principles without cash, but you can't make machines. From the days of his first childish attempt to sell newspapers Edison has met the money problem and he has handled it with skill, assiduity, and success. He never had any particular training in the keeping of books and some early experience with professionals in that line shook his confidence, so that his methods were peculiar and often rather personal. But an unshakable probity and a clear head pulled him through.

It need hardly be said that the desire of accumulating money for itself has played no part in his career. Also, his own Spartan personal habits, his utter indifference to luxury of any sort, made him careless of money from the point of view of personal spending. But he did need cash for his laboratories and experiments. When you want to put on your shelves specimens of every chemical, when you want to send men all over the world to get all sorts

of materials, you have got to pay. As success in his inventions brought the money rolling in, the inventor saw daily greater and greater need of it, and he did not hesitate one moment to pay out all he had for the sake of accomplishing some magnificent, longed-for result. In the same way heaps of costly materials must be wasted when they represented the outcome of experiment that was imperfect or unsuccessful.

It is this preoccupation with something else than the mere money side that Henry Ford indicated when he said: 'Edison is the world's greatest scientist and perhaps worst business man. He knows almost nothing of business.' [44] Like many of Ford's pronouncements, this is somewhat exaggerated, if not mistaken. Edison surely has the making of a magnificent man of business. But business to him is secondary to something far more important. He repeatedly indicates disgust and contempt for the interests and the methods of Wall Street. He is not at all sure of its fundamental honesty, and honesty to him is the keynote of financial as of all other life. He is sure that the man who makes money an end and not a means is hardly likely to make it even a substantial end.

But if the object of Edison's invention is not money, it is unquestionably and constantly the practical improvement of life and of the means of living. First, foremost, and always, he aims at the useful, what will immediately conduce to ameliorating and facilitating human existence. As he

once put it: 'Do you want to know my idea of a successful invention? It is something that is so practical that a Polish Jew will buy it.' [45] And he argues emphatically, 'What the country needs now is the practical skilled engineer, who is capable of doing everything.' [46]

As we look about us on all sides, it is impossible to deny the enormous effect of this practical work of Edison's in accomplishing just what he wished and intended. The advance in daily convenience, the speed, the variety, the facility of ordinary living, that the world owes to Edison, can hardly be measured or overestimated. When it comes to a somewhat deeper and broader point of view, there may be more question. Mankind are indisputably much better off materially, much better equipped for facing the mechanical struggles of life, and it may well be urged that solid spiritual benefit results from this very condition. On the other hand, it is repeatedly argued that the increase in comfort does not necessarily mean increase in happiness or increase in virtue. Those who declaim against the machine age, the universal standardization of everything, assert that machine-made virtue and machine-made happiness are neither possible nor desirable, and that all this insistence upon the practical, upon the benefit of ingenious mechanical devices, merely obscures and beclouds the profounder problems of the spirit.

Such speculations do not greatly interest Edison. He sees the laboring masses of mankind in dire

need. He wants to help them, he tries to help them, he does help them, and he is satisfied with accomplishing so much, and at the same time seeks to accomplish vastly more. 'The poor man with a family is the man who has my sympathy and is the man for whom I am working,' he says,[47] and it is impossible to deny that the saying is true, so far as it goes.

When it comes to the larger bearing of such effort on economics and politics, Edison leaves the solution of the problems to others. He is preoccupied with his own concerns, which would assuredly preoccupy any one. It is only now and then, and far less than his explosive friend Henry Ford, that he makes an excursion into political fields, as when he joined Ford in advocating 'commodity money.' Nevertheless on the broad question of the machine age he is clear and positive, and will not for a moment admit derogation or degradation. The development of machinery, the use of machinery, in every practical and possible way, seems to him an immense gain, and the world has nothing to do but go on and profit by these things just so far as they can be pushed and managed: 'I call machinery the greatest of emancipators. I will go farther and say that human slavery will not have been fully abolished until every task now accomplished by human hands is turned out by some machine, if it can be done as well or better by a machine.' [48]

VII

It is easy to recognize and admit that this world in which we are living has been changed, revolutionized, by mechanical invention. But does such invention much affect the other world, which still remains important to some of us? For, after all, the sojourn in this world, whether it is rendered comfortable or not, does not endure very long.

It cannot be said that Edison does not recognize the other world. There have been many interviews printed in which he discusses spiritual problems, though it may not be that his inventive powers have here been exercised very profitably. The most ingenious display of them appears to be in the hypothesis of the *monoids*, or *entities*, the vital units which he supposes to enter into the total composition of our bodies and also of our spiritual personality.[49] The question of our future survival he makes turn upon the continued aggregation or the disaggregation of such entities. In all these speculative comments, which indeed do not profess to be much more than rambling conjecture, one feels the working of an intensely active mind not very widely trained in the history of human thought.

Through all the speculation Edison frankly recognizes the possibility, or rather the necessity of God, of a dominating intelligence, as the only possible means of accounting for the working of law in the universe. And so far as God and the idea of God may be connected with personal working

moral habit, it may well be said that Edison, like Darwin, embodies and illustrates such habit in its highest and most winning perfection. But again as with Darwin, I see no evidence whatever of the personal need of God, of that intense, unquenchable, reaching out and yearning that, rightly or wrongly, forms the basis of all mysticism.

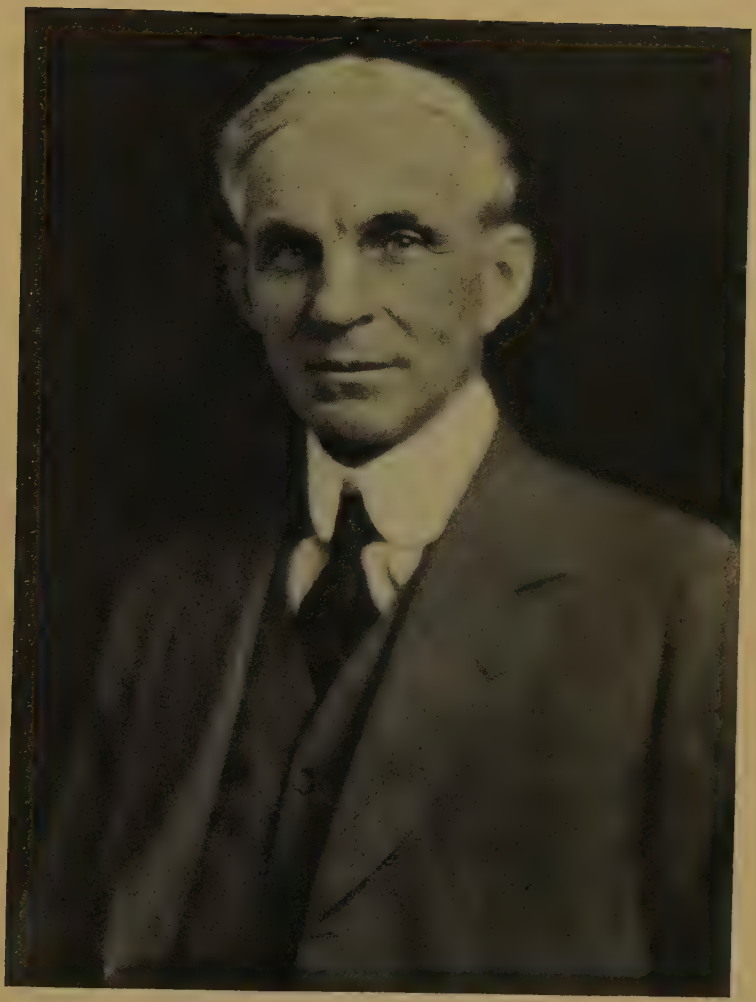
The truth is, the essence and the explanation of such a temperament as Edison's is just living, a constitutional, dynamic, enduring, perhaps in large part physical, optimism, which makes life and the world a continued daily splendor. How far such an optimism may be deliberately maintained and developed may be a question, but it would certainly be a magnificent thing for some of us to develop. In Edison it is manifestly inborn. He gets up every morning with a superb sense of life anticipated, and sleeps, when he does sleep, with an equally superb sense of life accomplished. It was a glorious saying of Whistler, 'The career of an artist always begins to-morrow.' The saying would have perfectly fitted Edison, and indeed he has his own words for the same thing: 'Spilt milk doesn't interest me. I have spilt lots of it, and while I have always felt it for a few days, it is quickly forgotten, and I turn again to the future.' [50] Or, even more largely and nobly, and in a phrase approximating Whistler's: 'I don't live with the past. I am living for to-day and to-morrow.' [51] Perhaps there is no better way of living for this world and also for another.

IV
THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE
HENRY FORD

CHRONOLOGY

HENRY FORD.

Born, Greenfield, Michigan, July 30, 1863.
In Detroit since 1887.
Married Clara J. Bryant, April 11, 1888.
Peace Ship Adventure, 1915.
Candidate for United States Senate, 1918.



HENRY FORD

IV

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

HENRY FORD

I

On the whole it may be said that the United States of America has always been a country of work. During the last three hundred years, with the developing means of transportation, repeated shocks of energy have come to this country, a flood of wanderers, representing the pushing, eager, active, restless elements of a score of European peoples, has pressed over, determined to make its way and its fortune, sometimes by illegitimate means, but more often by earnest, indefatigable, incessant toil. No doubt of late years the habit of work has somewhat faded, not owing to indolence, but to increasing luxury and distraction. Yet it may be safely said that it is work that has made the power and the prosperity of America.

Assuredly no American has ever been more of a worker than Henry Ford. He worked from his early childhood, all the time. The son of a well-to-do farmer in Michigan, of energetic, Scotch-Irish stock like Woodrow Wilson, Ford was born in 1863. He was early accustomed to the drudgery of the farm. As drudgery he hated it, and that hatred was a large element in all his later effort. Even as a boy he dabbled in mechanics, played with engines and

devised a scheme for making watches in vast numbers and selling them cheaply on the Ford plan. The sight of a clumsy, steam-driven engine moving on the roads was an inspiration for all his life-work. He early slipped away from the farm to Detroit and toiled long hours for small pay in machine shops and jeweler shops, learning all that the mechanics could tell him. Then he went back to his father for a time, married a lively, attractive girl, who believed in him, and as a farmer he appeared to be doing well. But the lure of the machine was too strong. He moved to Detroit and worked for years, through privation, poverty, and mockery, till he made the first Ford car. Finally he secured financial backing, then broke away from it and arrived at complete ownership, so that he could carry out his idea of producing what the largest possible public would buy at the lowest possible price and getting the best men to work for him by paying the best wages. Following this policy he became the richest and most materially successful man in the world. But at sixty-seven he works just as ardently as he always did. In him at any rate the passion for work can never be satisfied.

Ford, like Edison, is apt to attribute his success almost wholly to untiring, persistent work: 'When all is said and done, the ability to work means more than anything else.' [1] No doubt a few other elements enter in. There is the extraordinary varied fertility of an active and highly endowed brain, and there is the exquisite skill and efficiency of manipu-

lation in the fingers to bring the designs of the brain to reality. But steady work does count, enormously, and Ford is never tired of emphasizing it in all its aspects. At times it seems as if, judging others by himself, he was inclined to assume that the love of work is inherent in all men, whereas most of us love other things better, or, however we may work hard at our play, are indisposed to a task just because it is assigned us, whether it is assigned by others or by ourselves. Indeed Ford himself admits that he personally hates to take orders and that mere repetitive labor would be most irksome to him.

Nevertheless, he insists at all times upon the necessity and the duty of work. Work is the normal condition of humanity. We cannot be happy without it, we cannot be good without it, we cannot live without it. 'There is always something to be done in the world, and only ourselves to do it.' [2] And he makes the further, most important, point, that, if you want to get ahead, you must work not only at set hours, but all the time. 'I had plenty of time, for I never left my business. I do not believe a man can ever leave his business. He ought to think of it by day and dream of it by night.' [3] You cannot make a fortune by working when you are told and playing the bulk of the time.

Again, according to Henry Ford, work, to a well-constituted mind, is not only a duty but a pleasure. It brings not only wealth, but health and contentment: 'Some people seem to think that what is the

matter with the world is that people have to work for their living. Many men try to evade work as if it were a disease. But the world would be infinitely worse off if it were not for work.' [4] And he cries out against the tendency to shorten hours and shift burdens. One ought not to seek these things, but just the opposite: 'As a matter of fact, I don't believe in any hours for work. A man ought to work as long as he wants to, and he ought to enjoy his work so much that he wants to work as long as he can.' [5] In the Ford factories this is every one's state of mind, or at any rate Henry likes to think so.

And if there might be some argument about work as pleasure, there can be none about work as profit. The smallest necessities and the greatest luxuries can only be had and kept by somebody's working for them, and the material profit is in the end no greater than the spiritual: 'The day's work is at the foundation of the world; it is the basis of our self-respect.' [6] Or, put more largely and with the petulant vigor which Ford manages to get into his language: 'The idea is rather general that the chief curse of life is to work for a living. Thinking men know that work is the salvation of the race, morally, physically, socially. Work does more than get us our living: it gets us our life.' [7]

With such convictions about labor, it is evident that Ford would not have much sympathy with indolence or self-indulgence. Nor has he. A leisure class, living on the accumulation of the past, seems

to him as utterly parasitical and hateful as it seems to the Socialists and the Bolsheviks, though his idea of getting rid of it is different from theirs: 'In my mind nothing is more abhorrent than a life of ease. There is no place in civilization for the idler.' [8] Nor does this apply only to those who have never worked; it has equal force for the man who has worked hard and made his pile and thinks he has finished. Work is never finished. Only when we are working can we be sure that we are alive and we must work to the end, not for the material profit it may bring us, but for the spiritual benefit to the world and to ourselves.

As in all such cases, one inquires curiously what may be the underlying motives for this incessant, bee-like assiduity of labor. Ford himself insists that the desire of money is not among them, and this may be true, although the American habit of work is so intimately involved with the right to gain by that work that it is always difficult to separate the two. Ambition, the desire to succeed in what you have undertaken, is far more significant, to show these idlers, these gapers, these mockers, that you can do what you have set out to do, can make an automobile and make the world ride in it. But perhaps most significant of all is the eternal, unconscious, instinctive passion for doing something, the craving to be occupied, the fruitful nervousness, which is as habitual to some men as it is inexplicable to others. This restless undying activity seems to have been inherent in Ford, from childhood to

age, as is suggested in the comment of John Burroughs, describing one of their camping trips: 'Mr. Ford was so restless that if he could find nothing else to do he would clean out springs, or chop wood, or teach a young lad to run the car.' [9] Only in Ford the activity, which in many men is vague and gets nowhere, ran from the start in the direction that led to fortune.

II

For it cannot be denied that what appeals to the imagination of his country and of the wide world, even more than the automobile, is the fact that Ford in a few years progressed from nothing to a billion and is to-day the richest man that ever lived. And every one asks how he did it. It may be said at once that it was not by dishonesty or even by sharpness in the derogatory sense, though no doubt the man is shrewd enough in making a business deal in a business way. There was of course the great idea of producing something that every one would use with small profits on enormous sales. But no idea made this billion. It was the infinite care and intelligence in detail, the extraordinary organization for efficiency, the economy of human effort in every possible way, the saving of time, the saving of steps, the saving of strength. It was, for example, the insistent rule of perfect cleanliness, which Ford says he learned from his mother, and which might seem sometimes to be a useless luxury. But it pays in the end, in health and in production;

otherwise it would not be the Ford rule. Everywhere there is order, everywhere the marks of long, consistent thought, the overwhelming evidence of brains directing and utilizing the habit of work which never fails.

And as Ford's acquisition of money is profoundly interesting, so the same interest attaches to his views of the handling of it when you have got it. Every word that comes from him on such a matter has a vast influence on the youth of America, and when it was reported that he spurned saving, 'No successful boy ever saved any money. They spent it as fast as they could for things to improve themselves,' [10] a far-reaching incentive was supplied for tendencies already human enough and not requiring any special encouragement among the American youth of to-day. Obviously Ford's idea of spending and wasting was very different from that of the boy who lets his money flow out as freely as it comes in for any casual purpose. Being a passionate worker himself, the billionaire could not conceive of any one's spending except to advance his work. But when Ford looked about and appreciated the vast outlay on personal indulgence and luxury that was going on around him, his protest was as strenuous as that of any old-fashioned economist: 'Teaching and leading the people to invest wisely, to begin getting things that make their lives more productive of real values is one thing; teaching them to forget their natural abhorrence of debt, leading them to forego their

independence by working for a small army of instalment collectors is quite another thing.' [11] Yet probably Henry Ford's agency was as potent in this latter direction as any other one influence.

These utterances on saving are only a small item in the flood of comments with which Ford has enlightened the world on money as on many other matters. His financial discussions go far beyond the homely, concrete facts which might have a bearing upon his own prosperity and success. He does not hesitate to theorize about that complicated subject, the abstract nature of money and exchange and the difficult question of the gold and other possible standards. It is all a comparatively simple matter when you have invented and worked out a practicable automobile. Especially he loses no opportunity to abuse the experts in finance and the banking methods by which they carry on their operations. Even he is forced to admit that business could hardly thrive without banking to assist it. Nevertheless, the bankers are a parasitical class, flourishing on the hard, legitimate labor of the true business man and in an ideal society there would be no place for them whatever. As a shrewd critic expresses it, 'When Mr. Ford gets hammering Wall Street, and then goes on to hammering international bankers and Jews indiscriminately, he reminds one of A. E.'s Irish orator who was forever trying to bring up a large family of words on a small income of ideas.' [12]

But even when Ford is astonishing and some-

times amusing, he is always interesting, and his ideas about the use of money are as suggestive as about the getting and the care of it. Spending, for purposes of luxury or pleasure, has never been a large part of his program: he has no time to spend: 'I never have known what to do with money after my expenses were paid — can't squander it on myself without hurting myself, and nobody wants to do that. Money is the most useless thing in the world anyhow.' [13] Giving is a more serious matter, and when you have a billion, you can give a good deal without feeling it. Ford's generosity in individual cases, where his feelings are touched, is indisputable. But it has been noted that he does not embark on any such immensely extensive philanthropies as the Carnegie or Rockefeller Foundations, and the explanation of his attitude is to be found in his general views on charity which are expressed with the sharp incisiveness that distinguishes all his utterances. 'I have no patience with professional charity.' [14] Again: 'Why should there be any necessity for almsgiving in a civilized community? Instead of feeding the hungry why not go further and make hunger impossible? It is easy to give; it is harder to make giving unnecessary.' [15] A good deal harder, some of us would think; but nothing is impossible with Henry Ford: has he not made the automobile? All that is needed is to find work for everybody, and work can always be found. Then charity will not be required.

The chief point that impresses one in Ford's

many comments on money is his contempt for it. There is nothing of real value or permanent importance that money can do for you or give you. If you think of it as an end, you will stunt your life. 'He has no notion that wealth has made him great,' says one observer, 'and any one who is impressed merely by his wealth bores him.' [16] Over and over he repeats in ever-varying forms his favorite adage that it is not money that counts, but service. The public has made your fortune, it is your duty to turn it back to the public benefit: 'Business as a money-making game is not worth much thought. It is no place for a man who wants really to accomplish something. Also it is not the best way to make money. The foundation of real business is service.' [17] Or, more generally: 'We are growing out of this worship of material possessions. It is no longer a distinction to be rich. As a matter of fact, to be rich is no longer a common ambition.' [18]

Yet underneath it all one feels all the time that the man relishes to the full the enormous power that money gives him. When you have hundreds of millions in the bank and hundreds of thousands of men working for you, you become an almost incalculable force in the world, and Ford appreciates what this means as keenly as any one. It is not only the mere superficial sense of wealth, such as appears in Frank Munsey's remark to a friend, 'I like to pull out a roll and strip off a thousand-dollar bill and hand it to some one,' and as appears

still more in Ford's reply to Lochner's query as to whether he was willing to go the financial limit in his Peace efforts: 'Of course. Shucks! I can put $150,000,000 cash right now into this work if necessary. And then I have plans and inventions in my head that can net me another $150,000,000.... And, by the way, speaking of money reminds me. I've got $10,000 cash right now on my person; even Plantiff doesn't know anything about this. I thought that when we go to Europe you and I might want to run off on some little stunt of our own. Asking Plantiff for money might give it away.' [19] The sense of power goes far deeper than these manifestations, and involves the intimate appreciation that most men still look up to money with awe, not only for what it is but for what it does.

When I was a mere boy, I noticed my father's attitude in this matter with interest and amusement. My father was one of the most independent men who ever lived and he cared as little for money in itself as any one. He left business before he was forty because he had accumulated enough to enable him to indulge tastes and habits that he thought more spiritually worth while. Yet I never tired of observing the contrast between his deferential awe in saluting the local millionaire and the off-hand patronage in his greeting of the local minister. To watch it was an illiberal education.

III

You cannot do much in the world, certainly you cannot make much money without using human beings. At any rate Henry Ford has made vast and constant use of them, and the elements and aspects of this use deserve curious study. Like Edison, it would appear that Ford owed little in his early years to the influence of any one. His mother helped him and formed him much, he says, but she died when he was very young. I do not find that he had any teachers who counted greatly, even in his mechanical labors. He worked out his problems himself and got surer if slower results in that way.

On the other hand, there seems to be some question as to how much other men have influenced his career and policy in later years. Lochner, in his account of the Peace Ship adventure, suggests that Ford was much affected and at times almost controlled by other forces in the organization. The influence of his secretary Liebold is asserted to have been very powerful and Lochner gives a striking and vivid account of the methods employed by Marquis to dissuade his chief from following up the peace undertaking: 'He provided a setting of coldness, chilliness, and loneliness (Mr. Ford was left absolutely alone for hours at a time while Dr. Marquis locked the apartment and left) to hasten Mr. Ford's decision to quit the party and return to Detroit.' [20] Which certainly provides an odd comment on the futility of millions. But Lochner was

prejudiced and it should never be forgotten that Ford has always been supremely ingenious in slipping the responsibility for disagreeable decisions on to his subordinates.

The question arises as to Ford's insight and his gift for understanding the men and women with whom he works so largely. Opinions here seem to differ. By many observers he is said to be natural and simple in his approach to people, to listen to them, to defer to them, above all to be quick and sure in his apprehension of their characters and lives. And again Marquis assures us that if Mr. Ford had been a better listener and mixer, he would have avoided some mistakes. But Marquis also is obviously prejudiced and the natural conclusion is that Ford, with his admirable gift of quick and subtle thinking, goes right to the bottom of men's hearts when he has occasion to, but that much of the time he is too absorbed with his own problems and interests to concern himself about those of others.

There is the same apparent contradiction in his judgment of mankind in general. With the natural haughtiness of one who has done great things easily, where the mass of men cannot do them at all, he is inclined to emphasize the distinctions. Some men are born to do the monotonous tasks, which he could not endure. Let them do them. Some men are born plodders, others are born pioneers, and it is fortunate for the race that it is so. There is no more absurd folly than the insistence that all men

are born equal or can ever become equal. Nor should we accept a too optimistic view of men's virtue any more than of their intelligence. Most systems of reform 'make the assumption of honesty among mankind to begin with, and that, of course, is a prime defect. Even our present system would work splendidly if all men were honest.' [21] Yet with all this cynicism in spots, Ford frequently shows a sincere as well as an ostentatious kindliness and there is not wanting evidence of a candid trust in human nature that is almost naïve.

With this general basis of human understanding Ford of course had at all times to meet all sorts of persons in his business progress. There were those whom he met on a footing of equality, colleagues or competitors. Evidently in the early years he had to depend much upon assistance, at any rate financial assistance, from others. There seems to have been no serious friction or difficulty. He was always tactful, always considerate. When his partners left him, it was usually on good terms and often with a large fortune in their pockets. But they left him, or he got rid of them, for he believed in playing a lone hand and played it. One curiously significant feature of his persistent assertion of independence is unwillingness to be bound by appointments with anybody. Even persons of great consequence have waited for hours in Ford's anterooms, so that his secretary cries out in despair: 'I tell you, Mr. Ford keeps me on the jump inventing excuses for his forgetfulness.' [22] With com-

petitors it is something the same as with coadjutors. In the abstract Ford speaks of competition with respect. It is the life of business and only through it can progress be made. But when his interests are threatened, he can be very active, and his obstinate fight against those who sued him for infringement of patent is one of the most notable events of his career.

Even more interesting is Ford's relation to those who serve him. From every one he gets all that can be got, and he would be the first to admit it. There are the manual workers for a weekly wage. Ford secures the best men that can be had by paying them liberally. He furnishes them every facility and encouragement that can be given by mechanical appliances and aids to efficiency of all kinds, he provides for their health and comfort and safety, he stimulates their interest to work in every possible way — and then he expects an almost incredible amount of work and sees that it is done. He never orders, he suggests; but his suggestions are as valid as the orders of Cæsar or Peter the Great. He often goes quietly in overalls among the men, moves and speaks and works as one of them, but they are perfectly aware that he is the boss of them and of millions, and he knows they are. It is the same with the workers of a higher rank. Take the corps of writers, of one kind or another. They often provide Ford with words, sometimes it seems as if they provided him with thoughts; but the thoughts and the words, like the time and the life, become

his, for he pays for them. And if it is convenient to shift the master's sins on to their shoulders, it is done — and paid for. So with the managing executives everywhere. They are well paid and treated with consideration. But they have to be efficient, they have to take the burden of severity off their chief's shoulders when it is indicated, and if they show symptoms of being too independently capable, they have to — disappear.

With this apparent remorseless exaction there is also an at any rate apparent extreme thoughtfulness for every worker, from the highest to the lowest. Better wages are paid than any one else pays. Sickness is provided for as well as health, and you can be treated in the magnificent Ford Hospital — only it must be strictly according to the Ford rules. The lame, the blind, the crippled, have always been regarded as a useless burden on society. In the Ford shops they are made useful and happy with work and proper employment is found for them, which often they can do better than any one else. Have you been a drunkard or a thief or a murderer and are you just out of jail? It makes no difference to Ford. You apply for a job, you show your capacity for doing it, and you get it and keep it, so long as you continue to behave decently. Your police record is obliterated and forgotten.

Ford himself strongly and constantly emphasizes the philanthropic aspect of all these matters. He is the friend and benefactor of poor people, wants to benefit them in every way, and is benefiting them

by providing them with work that will bring them an honest livelihood: 'I don't want any more than my share of money. I'm going to get rid of it — to use it all to build more and more factories, to give as many people as I can a chance to be prosperous.' [23] And the enthusiastic John Burroughs says much the same thing: 'He is always thinking in terms of the greatest good to the greatest number. He aims to place his inventions within reach of the great mass of the people.' [24] More cynical critics do not always echo the benign eulogy. Mr. Pound emphasizes the assistance Ford must have received from many helpers, yet 'the semi-autobiographical story of Ford's business contains no mention of these. Mr. Ford does not share authority; neither does he share the limelight.' [25] And again: 'The public gifts of Henry Ford are small in proportion to his huge earnings.... There is no hint as yet that the Ford wealth is troubling the Ford conscience or the Ford spirit.' [26] And one extremely harsh critic declares that Ford 'is as selfish a man as God permits to breathe.' [27]

There can be no question as to the sincerity of Ford's own convictions in the matter. When he says, 'All business should be reshaped on a basis of service. I want to show that poverty can be abolished by increasing the service rendered to the people by all business,' [28] he means what he says and is doing his best to act upon it. But it is endlessly curious to trace the complication of motive in the matter. For Ford himself amply admits that

the simple philosophy of this large benefaction is that it pays. You are not doing it for that, your motive is better and higher. All the same it does pay. You make the world better wisely, judiciously — and you get rich doing it: 'Do what is fundamentally best for everybody. It will work out for our interests in the end.' [29] The widest usefulness carries with it fatally, inevitably, the biggest profit. Now the ordinary man finds it difficult to see his way in this complicated spiritual process and even gets to resent 'service' as an eternally reiterated watchword. Is he really being helped? Is he really being exploited? Are both possible at once? Such inconvenient interrogation attaches and will attach to the philanthropic millionaire, and as a consequence he may be respected and admired, he is rarely beloved.

IV

Even these most absorbed and furious workers must have some distraction, though it seems as if not many of them, not even Edison, had less than Ford, and especially as if not many infused more of the element of work into their distractions. He sometimes proclaims that he can find fun in anything, but for him work remains the greatest of amusements, 'the greatest fun of all being in the day's work.' [30]

Many persons find the rarest and most delicate distraction in the things of the mind and look upon intellectual pleasures as being the most varied and

inexhaustible. The complication of Henry Ford's view in this matter is most interesting. He appreciates that thinking is a vital essential of all fruitful work of any kind and that it is not only fruitful but laborious: 'An educated man is one who can accomplish things. A man who cannot think is not an educated man, no matter how many college degrees he has. Thinking is the hardest work that any one can do.' [31] Yet thinking as an amusement, thinking for itself and unproductive, he cannot too bitterly condemn. Intellectual activity, followed as a mere pastime, is perilous, seductive, corrupting: 'Our reading is too casual. We read to escape thinking. Reading can become a dope habit.... Book-sickness is a modern ailment.' [32]

He has at least been determined that that ailment should not affect his robust physique. He had little formal education to begin with and he has never supplemented it by the wide irregular reading which Edison has kept up so remarkably. Ford says, 'I don't like to read books; they muss up my mind.' [33] A curious aspect of this aversion to acquiring knowledge is his attitude toward the specialist and the expert. Sometimes he insists that if we want to know anything we should find it out for ourselves, only so can we have a sure grip on it. Yet again he admits that he turns to specialists for all sorts of information. Why should he grub and toil when he can pay a man to tell him all he wants in five minutes? And yet all the time he is using the expert he despises him, declaring that he is the ruin

of business and can only see things and do things according to convention and precedent.

In this disregard of ignorance and even praise of it lies the root of many of Ford's strange limitations. He boasts his contempt for the past, he calls history 'bunk,' he proclaims that the present and the future are all that interest him. As if any man could use the present or gauge the future without knowing the past! As if he himself, Henry Ford, in urging this view were not the most suggestive comment upon the admirable words of Woodrow Wilson: 'The worst possible enemy to society is the man who with a strong faculty for reasoning and for action is cut loose in his standards of judgment from the past.' [34] And it would be difficult to exceed the intellectual arrogance of Ford's own pronouncement: 'The only reason why every man does not know everything that the human mind has ever learned is that no one has ever yet found it worth while to know that much.' [35]

If Ford has little interest in intellectual pleasures, in æsthetic he has still less. Painting, sculpture, and music are as much 'bunk' and waste of time as history. Processes sometimes interest him, and he has spent many hours in artists' studios watching them work; [36] but the results are of little consequence. So with the natural world. He proclaims a desire to enable all mankind to enjoy 'God's great spaces,' and he takes pains to protect the birds. But when he goes on a camping trip, he wants to be doing something, making fires or cutting down

trees, and his chief interest in the streams is, how much power they might be made to yield.

It is something the same with human relations. Ford is kindly and affectionate and lovable, so far as he has time for such things. He appears to cherish his mother's memory with deep devotion: she taught him how to keep things clean, which is of the greatest use in a factory and in making a fortune. He delayed inventing the automobile for a few months, so that he might woo a capable girl and marry her, and he found her advice, her criticism, and above all her trust and confidence of the greatest value in his work: 'It was a very great thing to have my wife even more confident than I was. She has always been that way.' [37] And he turns to her in many things besides work.

Perhaps the most charming hint of distraction that I have come across in connection with Ford is his love for children. Lochner says, 'Henry Ford is at his best when playing with children. They take to him instinctively. He will sit on the floor with them, whittle wooden toys for them, tell them simple stories and forget wholly about affairs of the greatest moment while thus enjoying himself.' [38] In this connection I wish I had more light about his dealings with his son Edsel. Apparently he not only always adored the boy but is ready to turn over to him his largest interests and most momentous concerns. Is Edsel merely or mainly a brilliant sample of his father's handiwork, or, as sometimes happens in these cases, is the strong, authoritative,

arbitrary father completely subdued and moulded to the suggestion and influence of the son?

Again, in larger human relations I wonder whether Ford has any real, close friends. He seems at times to have an almost wistful longing for human kinship and speaks of friendship as a rare and precious possession. But he must feel keenly the difficulty of securing genuine attachment for a man in his position. That billion hedges him off with a more impassable barrier than even thrones and crowns. How can you ever be sure that the man who approaches you does not want something? And most of them do. Flattery and cringing and time-serving intrude and crowd into such an atmosphere with an inevitable and fatal pressure. You feel the singular weight of these things in all the Ford biographies. The oppression of millions hangs upon them and distorts and disfigures everything.

In general social intercourse and conversation Ford is said to be gentle, quiet, unassertive, and even shy. As Lord Northcliffe said of him, 'Ford, who looks like the Bishop of London, is an anti-militant ascetic and must not be treated as a commercial man.' [39] He is extremely averse to speaking in public and avoids it wherever possible. But when he is once at ease and likes his audience, his flow of words is free and abundant. He tells good stories, plenty of them, and he has a play of quiet jesting, even occasionally at himself.

Amusement in general seems to be something

he knows little about. When he was a boy, he swam and skated. He still skates when he can. Skating is good physical exercise and exercise is necessary to health and hence to work. Ford has always cared for his health and by exercise, moderate eating, and total abstinence from stimulants he has kept his spare, lean body capable of tremendous effort, so that in the sixties he was fully equal to the remodeling of the standard Ford, which he called the greatest labor of his life.

But amusement as such is rather unimportant. One curious pastime has developed in his later years, the collecting of relics of antiquity, and his purchase and restoration of the Wayside Inn with accessories is almost as notorious as the automobile. The interesting thing here is that after so energetically decrying the historical past, the man should set himself to establishing a museum of antiques. The explanation seems to be that he is immensely interested in the past, provided it concerns himself. Perhaps a little wider study would have taught him that the history of the whole world exists only to throw light upon you and me and Henry Ford.

Games proper are even less profitable than larger amusements. Ford used to play baseball as a boy and in age occasionally condescends to millionaire golf. But these things make little appeal. Here again there is the curious exception and in later years he has revived the old-fashioned dances of his youth. The whole treatment of these is char-

acteristic. No sooner does he get interested, than he hires a satellite to write up the subject, and the old reels and rounds and square-dances are all formally standardized with the completeness of every Ford institution. Yet somehow I cannot imagine Ford really carried away by the exhilaration and the ecstasy of the dance. What he needs to make him perfect is to be vamped by a siren of a New York night club. But it is a little difficult to imagine Henry Ford in this connection.

V

When a man analyzes life in general with such shrewd and penetrating if often divagating insight, one is naturally curious about his analysis of himself. Here there are the usual Ford contradictions. Sometimes he seems peculiarly apt and willing to reveal his soul. Hear what one observer has to say on this head: 'As I talked with him, he gave the impression that he thinks aloud, one was astonished at the thoughts he permitted to escape from the hidden sources of his mind. Another man would not say everything he thought. Ford does.' [40] Yet again he shuts up, and seems determined to let no one see the inner life at all. As he said to a man once: 'You know me too well; hereafter I am going to see to it that no man comes to know me as intimately as you do.' [41] And the very abundance of Ford's talks on all sorts of subjects, their abundance and apparent abandon, is misleading. He says a great deal, but he says so much you do

not quite know what he is saying. Moreover, you can never be sure what is Ford and what is his interpreter. He is so much in the habit of letting others speak for him that he gets to accepting and admitting their representation of his thought as his own, when in reality his own might be different.

Yet with all these drawbacks and difficulties you can get extraordinary glimpses of insight into an extraordinary character, and the difficulties, as usual, only make the effort more interesting. Take Ford's estimate of his own practical abilities and powers. On the surface he is extremely modest and deprecatory about them. Nothing remarkable there, nothing that every ordinary man does not have, if he is disposed to use it. Any man can make a billion dollars, if he will take the trouble. Yet all the time, almost unconsciously, you feel the secure exaltation, the immense and solid egotism, which does appreciate that it stands above others, far above them, whether by their incapacity or their indolence is not important. It is all apologetic, it is always carefully *we* who do things. But the *we* simply doubles, triples, infinitely multiplies the personality and the greatness and the achievement of Henry Ford. There is nothing more interesting to watch than the studied and for that matter often the real modesty of an ego that identifies itself with the universe, as you and I also do for that matter.

With this consciousness of his own power is there in Ford any consciousness of practical weakness or deficiency? I have searched for such, but I do not find many. He says of himself, 'When I go into a thing, I usually jump in with both feet.' [42] But this sounds quite as much like the assertion of a quality as the admission of a defect. And in the larger field of moral excellence or imperfection I find Ford much the same. There is never a hint of conceited boasting of his own virtue, but there is a comfortable assurance of it, all the same, and never anywhere is there the faintest suggestion of disquietude or discomfort over matters of conduct done or omitted. You might be better, you might be worse; but you are just — Henry Ford, doing the best you can, and why should God ask any more of you?

In his aims and ideals as regards life at large, as well as regards business, Ford is absolutely sincere, there can be no question of it. He may be incoherent, he may be unpractical, but he is never hypocritical, never talks for the sake of talking. He is always trying to get somewhere, even when it is not quite clear where, and the lack of clarity is sometimes owing to the altitude. When he says, 'There is a pleasure in feeling that you have made others happy — that you have lessened in some degree the burdens of your fellow-men,' [43] when he cries passionately, 'I have dedicated my life and fortune to helping to bring back peace on earth,' [44] you may not be impressed with his methods, but

his aim is as lofty as it is creditable. In all these utterances, and his books and his life are full of them, you get the impression of a man who has somehow outgrown himself, whose brain is reaching into a region far different from that touched by his manipulating hands and trodden by his feet.

In such an extended career of ideal and often vaguely directed effort one would suppose that there must be many plain failures, and it is interesting to get Ford's attitude towards these. What it amounts to is that, like Edison, he refuses to recognize failure at all. What is it but merely a stepping-stone in the progress to success? Difficulties? To be sure, he does say, 'It is better to avoid difficulties than to overcome them.' [45] But evidently he relishes difficulties and thrives on them: they give him the sense of power which is the sense of life: 'It is when there are problems to solve and obstacles to remove that Ford is most himself and at his best,' says Mr. Benson.[46] Stick to it, and you will not fail: 'More men are beaten than fail. It is not wisdom they need or money, or brilliance, or "pull," but just plain gristle and bone.' [47]

As Ford discounts failure, so he rids himself of discouragement, depression, melancholy, and all the disagreeable concomitants that failure brings with it. I have looked long and carefully for suggestions of nerves, of the haunting, harrowing burden of futility and uselessness by which genius is so apt to be overcome and oppressed, but such

things are rare indeed as the murmured sigh to Lochner in Norway, when the Peace expedition was losing its glamor and Ford was laid low by illness: 'Guess I had better go home to mother. I told her I'd be back soon. You've got this thing started and can get along without me.' [48] And in general there is no admission of despair in any way whatever. Depression is unreasonable and meaningless. It has its root in fear, and fear is the deadliest enemy of man's achievement in general: 'Fear is the portion of the man who acknowledges his career to be in the keeping of earthly circumstances. Fear is the result of the body assuming ascendency over the soul.' [49]

In contrast with failure, or in keeping with his estimate of it, is Ford's estimate of success. Undeniably there is a certain curiously mystic element in this. When all is said and done, he feels that there is a subtle something which brings or helps to bring plans to a happy consummation. He told Mr. Benson once that 'a certain dream always came to him before each great business adventure. I quickly asked him what it was, but he would not tell me.' [50] Success with him, however, is far from being a matter of dreams. It is a matter of the same old persistent, indefatigable labor. People see great successes and think they are easy, all a matter of dreams. They are wrong: 'Success is always hard. A man can fail in ease, he can succeed only by paying out all that he has and is. It is this which makes success so pitiable a thing if it be

in lines that are not useful and uplifting.' [51] And because labor is so large an element of it, every man ought to be able to succeed provided his aims are reasonably possible, while Ford's splendid optimism enlarges the region of possibility far beyond the vision of most of us: 'Henry Ford is a self-made man. But because he has landed on top, he assumes that everybody else can do so. He believes that when a man fails to succeed, it is largely his own fault.' [52]

Finally with Ford there is the realization that he is one of the most talked of men in the wide world and the question is how much he enjoys it. If you listen to his admiring friends, you will conclude that publicity is the last thing he thinks of. It is necessary to get the Ford automobiles and tractors to the people who need them. For himself he prefers quiet and life in shadow. But there are some utterances of his own and of others that make one doubt a little. He does indeed say, 'Most of us will never attain fame, and that is a pity, because then we shall never have the opportunity to realize how well off we were without it.' [53] But perhaps the deeper truth of human nature shows in another remark: 'All men like praise. If a man says that he doesn't, he should examine himself again.' [54] And the critical Marquis observes: 'I think he would rather be the maker of public opinion than the manufacturer of a million automobiles a year, which only goes to show that in spite of the fact that he sticks out his tongue at history, he would

nevertheless not object to making a little of it himself.' [55] In other words, if Henry Ford were to wake up some day and find that he was not one of the most prominent men in the world, the result would probably be some new discovery or development that would put him on the front page once more.

VI

To complete the study of Henry Ford, it is necessary to consider his relation to the spiritual and abstract questions and elements of life. When these questions are connected with this world he is at all times full of interest in them. His busy and active mind is perpetually occupied with the larger problems, and the everlasting puzzle with him is to understand how an intelligence so sure and solid in the practical matters which have been his proper concern can trust itself and thrust itself with arrogant confidence in fields as to which he has little experience and less information. It is perfectly natural that he should have and express vigorous opinions about work and wages. But when it comes to complicated matters like general economics and finance, the minutiæ of education, and the broader bearing of machines on life, one's interest is directed rather to how Ford comes to venture into such subjects than to the value of the opinions themselves. Yet on every one of these great themes he has a secure and positive pronouncement, such as it is.

With these sociological aspirations, it would

seem obvious that Ford would be interested in the political means by which they might be realized. But his unlimited contempt for bankers and lawyers is quite equaled by his contempt for politicians. They are a useless tribe who give themselves to talk, and inefficiency like theirs would run the Ford organization on the rocks inside of a week. 'What the world chiefly needs to-day is fewer diplomats and politicians and more men advancing from kerchiefs to collars.' [56] The most curious point here is Ford's own candidacy for the Senate, which was defeated by the corrupt practices of Newberry, and still more the movement to nominate him for President in 1924. It is notable that a vast body of farmers and Americans generally were inclined to favor him, and still more interesting is his own attitude in the matter. Ostensibly he was indifferent and even unwilling. He was occupied with bigger concerns than being president of the United States. But at the same time there is a charming, simple, shy suggestion that when the great need comes Henry Ford is in the background, always available: 'The leaders are here, although they do not crave any honor which is bought at the price of helplessness and impotence in office. The leaders are here, but they will not fight for the tinsel of a public title. The leaders are here; and when the hour arrives for *free, untrammeled* public service, these men will move quite naturally into their places.' [57] Now who do you suppose the leaders can be?

To estimate Ford's qualifications for the presidency it is of advantage to sum up a few of the chimerical projects as well as the singular antipathies, which he has brought forward at one time or another. Among the latter the chief is the fierce attack on the Jews, which was waged by the Dearborn *Independent*, until the bitter irritation aroused drove Ford to disclaim the excesses and shift the burden to others. Of the more positive schemes there is the Muscle Shoals plan, which he still hopes to carry out, with its dazzling intermixture of public benefit and personal profit, the many suggestions for making over the life of the farmer, commodity money, which is to destroy the golden supremacy of those horrible bankers, the strange, almost unbelievable adventure of the Peace Ship, so much more like a Don Quixote than an automobile manufacturer, and, crowning all, the absolute confidence that radios and airplanes will bring about universal harmony: 'The motion-picture with its universal language, the airplane with its speed, and the radio with its coming international program — these will soon bring the whole world to a complete understanding. Thus may we vision a United States of the World. Ultimately it will surely come.' [58]

Underneath these somewhat fantastic divagations it is always easy to trace a sure and solid basis of traditional middle-class American morals, which Ford learned at his mother's knee and has never forgotten. This appears admirably in the

delightful talk with that thoroughly kindred spirit, Eddie Guest: 'I have tried to live my life as my mother would have wished. I believe I have done, as far as I could, just what she hoped for me. She taught duty in this world. I believed her then and I believe her now. I have tried to follow her teachings.' [59]

On the other hand, when it comes to deeper and larger religious and philosophical considerations, Ford seems singularly empty and unprofitable. Here again the conventional attitude is obvious enough. Always go to church, even if you only get a little comfortable sleep in that way. Read your Bible. Under all circumstances observe the Sabbath, because mother did, and no wheel turns in any Ford factory on Sunday. But I do not find that God or the future are of much more import to Henry Ford than to Theodore Roosevelt or Nikolai Lenin. Do your work here, and let these ulterior matters take care of themselves: 'Religion, like everything else, is a thing that should be kept working. I see no use in spending a great deal of time learning about heaven and hell.' [60] The odd point is that the only thing about the future life which appears to interest Ford is more, more, a lot more of life here, and the one vital element of his creed is the theory of reincarnation. If he can't get Muscle Shoals in this existence, he may come back and get it later: who knows?

And another striking point in Ford's religious connection is that, so far as he is interested in God

at all, it is as a God of work. 'The Lord is working and will clear the land of those who will not go ahead.' [61] In other words, God has got to work in order to keep his job. If he did not work day and night, like Henry Ford, the universe would not only not be worth living in, it would collapse and disappear. 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' Everybody works. But some of us, who are probably born indolent and therefore natural objects of contempt, like to believe in and cherish the pure, divine possibility of play.

So as one looks back at this varied, many-colored survey, one finds the man not perhaps more of a mystery than most, but at any rate strangely complicated and one remembers the ingenious comment of Marquis, that 'he has in him the makings of a great man, the parts lying about in more or less disorder. If only Henry Ford were properly assembled!' [62] With all the millions, with all the powers, with all the successes, with all the knotty problems solved and forgotten, one somehow gets the impression of a man groping, struggling, trying to adjust a universe that is vastly, tragically inadjustable, in short, of a man forever wrestling with life just like you and me.

V
THE WORLD AS IDEA
NIKOLAI LENIN

CHRONOLOGY

Vladimir Ilyitch Ulianov (Nikolai Lenin).
Born, Simbirsk, April 10, 1870.
At Kasan University, 1887.
Brother hanged, 1887.
Admitted to Bar in Samara, 1892.
Agitation in Saint Petersburg till 1896.
Arrested December, 1896.
In Siberia, 1897–1900.
Married Nadeshda Krupskaya, 1898.
Iskra newspaper founded, 1900.
Involved in Revolution, 1905.
Wandering life till 1917.
Returned to Russia, 1917.
Became head of government, November, 1917.
Died, January 21, 1924.

NIKOLAI LENIN

V

THE WORLD AS IDEA

NIKOLAI LENIN

I

Nikolai Lenin lived and died with one paramount object, to overturn the world organization of society in such a way that wealth, leisure, and the means of happiness should not be confined to a small class, but should be fairly distributed among the vast masses who perform the useful labor of the world. Whether such an object is in any way attainable, and whether Lenin's methods could ever be really effective or justifiable for attaining it, may well be questioned. But such question does not come with the best grace from one who has profound sympathy with Lenin's aims but who has himself always been a thorough-going parasite of the capitalist system which Lenin so energetically condemned and who feels that his sole claim to the benefits of such parasitism is the fact of possession, to which he clings with an obstinacy exactly proportioned to the frailty of its tenure. All that is attempted here is a thorough and searching analysis of the soul of Nikolai Lenin himself.

Lenin, whose real name was Vladimir Ilyitch Ulianov, was born in Simbirsk, southeastern Russia, in 1870, of a fairly well-to-do family, which had made its way into the minor nobility from the

peasant class. His dreaming youth was concentrated and crystallized by the execution of his adored elder brother in 1887 for attempted assassination of the Czar, and this is said to have been the origin of Ilyitch's relentless, life-long effort to overthrow tyranny and give the lowly and downtrodden the dominion of the earth. His determined agitation with this view naturally made him obnoxious to the imperial government. He was watched, arrested, sent to Siberia for three years, and then kept in wandering exile all over Europe, during which he worked into connection and gradual leadership with many whose passions and tendencies were similar. He took an active, if not the most prominent, part in the Russian Revolution of 1905, only to be exiled for another ten years of equal turbulence. Finally the Great War brought his opportunity. Under the Kerensky régime he returned to Russia in 1917 and by skilful manipulation and fortunate circumstances he found himself until his death in 1924 at the head of the government with an authority over millions unsurpassed by that of any Czar or Mussolini or Napoleon. The sudden, tremendous, overwhelming contrast between past and present is nowhere better indicated than in his brief remark to Trotzky immediately after he had come into power: 'The transition from the state of illegality, being driven in every direction, to power — is too rough: it makes one dizzy.' [1] And he made the sign of the cross before his face.

A question at once arises as to the motives which were the driving force behind this forthright and overmastering life-career, but their complexity is almost beyond disentanglement. Lenin's admirers insist that personal ambition was no motive with him at all. They say that he forgot himself altogether and lived simply in absolute devotion to a great cause, that he cared nothing for glory or display or the outside or trappings of power. As if history had not proved to us again and again that the most furious love of power shows itself in just such disdain of the outward manifestation of it. There is no madder or more engrossing ambition than that of making over the world.

The first forty years of Lenin's life were simply years of preparation for the marvelous six years, from 1918 until his death, when he was master of Russia. During those forty years he was scheming, dreaming — 'one must have something to dream of,' [2] he wrote in the early days — reading, sometimes twelve to fifteen hours a day, laying vast plans for all possible contingencies. There may be some exaggeration in the report of an early associate, but there is doubtless some truth. 'For days at a stretch, perhaps during sleepless nights, alone with himself, he was working out plans for seizing the government — thinking them out step by step in every detail, forestudying all possibilities and eventualities.' [3] It was the entire concentration and supreme erection of a life upon one devouring purpose and hope.

And he came across the writings of Karl Marx. What he would have been without Marx it is impossible to say, but it is obvious that Marx made Lenin intellectually. When he was in London, he spent long hours sitting by Marx's tombstone in Highgate Cemetery. But he spent many more and much more fruitful hours in the assiduous perusal of Marx's works, in the ardent digestion of them, and in working them over, with apparently little modification, in far vaster writing of his own, for the complete edition of his writings now being issued in Russia and on the verge of translation is said to run to thirty volumes.

The cardinal principle of Marx is of course the tireless, ceaseless, remorseless war between the proletariat and the capitalist bourgeoisie, war which must be carried on by ruthless means and which can only end in the complete victory and permanent domination of the working-classes. And this political economy is founded on a philosophical materialism utterly destructive of the spiritual verities which, as some persons still believe, have kept mankind going through a few thousands of years. It is true that the somewhat cloudy German metaphysics of Marx are susceptible of varied interpretations and many of his followers see things differently from Lenin. But the Russian agitator liked simplicity, and the Marxian attitude, as above simplified, was quite adequate for him in the building of a life-philosophy and a world administration. He taught Marx, he preached Marx, he lived Marx,

and as soon as ever he got the chance, he acted Marx with a venomous realism which would have astonished his master and perhaps a little bewildered him. Nor was the edge of this Marxian ardor in the least blunted by the addition of some whetting from the perusal of such books as Georges Sorel's 'Reflections on Violence,' in which destruction is lauded and idolized as a beneficial force in itself and one essential for the purification and reinvigoration of humanity.

For it cannot be denied that to destroy, to overthrow, to tear down, to uproot, was a primitive instinct in Lenin's disposition. When he came to exercise command, he was mercilessly arbitrary and authoritative; but, like many such people, he bitterly hated to be repressed and commanded himself. He seized upon 'Revolution,' the watchword of his master, Marx, and made it the guiding principle of his life. A hundred years earlier Thomas Paine joyously drank a toast to the ideal revolution of the world. Lenin strove to make the idea a reality. After overturning Russia, he schemed to overturn all Europe, America, and Asia, and it is possible that even yet his schemes may come to fruit. Revolution, rebellion, were the breath of life to him, and his naïve joy in them peers out in his delightful confession: 'It is more pleasant and more useful to live through the experience of a revolution than to write about it.' [4]

After which, it must be admitted that the man thought of construction as well as destruction.

When you had torn down the old, worn-out fabric of bourgeois statecraft, something must be substituted, and he planned long and elaborately and wrote thousands of pages explaining how the dictatorship of the proletariat could be and would be established and what mighty wonders it would accomplish for the regeneration of the world. In all these pages, as in the speculations of the master, Marx, himself, there is a terrible, dry, musty savor of German doctrinaire metaphysics, a hard, logical theorizing, which somehow does not suggest any very immediate practical connection with fact. Take, for example, Madame Lenin's explanation of her husband's attitude: 'He desired power for the working class, for he knew that it was not in order to build up a comfortable life for itself at the cost of the other toilers that the working-class desired power. He knew that the historical mission of the working-class was to emancipate all who toiled and all who were oppressed.' [5] It does not seem to get us very far. Or take Lenin's own statement: 'But, striving for Socialism, we are convinced that it will develop further into Communism, and side by side with this there will vanish all need for force, for the subjection of one man to another, of one section of society to another, since people will grow accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social existence without force and without subjection.' [6] Beside this sort of thing mere destruction had a convenient definiteness which was perfectly practical, and anyway the destruction had to come first.

So it went on for the forty years of preparing. Then in 1918 the man leaped into absolute power, and a great administrator was born. Some writers express amazement at the sudden change, at the difference between the dreaming Lenin of earlier years and the doer of later. But it is probable, is manifest, the doer was the real man, and was simply waiting his chance. At any rate, when the door of opportunity was flung open, the great executive swept through it with magnificent *éclat*. All the qualities of a statesman shone out in him. He went straight at the heart of difficult problems, caught the essence of them, and solved them. He knew the secrets of administration, took up all that was useful and profitable in the old system, and remorselessly threw out what was wasteful and useless. He was a born organizer, and chaos took working shape under his adroit and nimble fingers. He loved to manipulate men's souls and sorted and sifted and shifted them till they all fitted together for his purposes.

It seems extraordinary that a man of fifty, who had never really managed great affairs, should develop such statesmanlike capacity; but it should be remembered that the experience of Cæsar and of Cromwell was the same. This man had the doer's magnificent self-confidence, which some of us find it almost as hard to imagine as to share. He liked to make difficult decisions. Supposing he did not always make them rightly: could others make them better? He liked the responsibility for the welfare

and the illfare of others, which to more timid souls is simply intolerable. This superb doer realized perfectly well that he made mistakes, and he did not hesitate a moment to confess them. He knew that he was big enough and strong enough to come before his followers and say to them, 'He who finds himself in a blind alley must turn back; he who has done a thing wrongly must begin it over again. This business has to be learned and not until then shall we endure the test or win out in the race.' [7] So arguing, he reversed his course and adopted the New Economic Policy, which recognized the necessity of combining the abhorred methods of Capitalism with working Communism to some extent and temporarily. And his frankness, his energy, and above all his winning persuasiveness were sufficient to carry his followers with him anywhere.

Perhaps the supreme test of greatness is growth, adaptability, the power of fitting soul to circumstance, and certainly this power was Lenin's in a high degree. 'The art of government cannot be gotten out of books,' he cried, 'try, make mistakes, learn how to govern.' [8] He is constantly reiterating the imperative necessity of keeping close to *life*: 'Such questions are answered *only* by life itself.' [9] In this aspect he might perhaps be called an opportunist, but it would be cruel to call him so since some of the harshest epithets in his rich vocabulary of abuse are attached to this very word opportunist in the sense of the man who always keeps his ear to the ground, who is trying to curry popular favor and

to catch the slightest veering wind of temporary prejudice so that he may trim his sails to it. In contrast to this cheap and shallow opportunism I would rather call Lenin's disposition 'vitalism,' the profound vitalism of a Cæsar, a Napoleon, or a Lincoln, which moves with far-reaching insight and dominating, prevailing purpose, yet constantly adapts and adjusts that purpose to the living, vital movement of human circumstance, always with the fixed determination of arriving at a long-predestined goal.

How much of that goal Lenin would have reached it is impossible to say. His premature death left a chaos of which no man can yet foresee the end. But, judging from his manifest abilities and from what he did accomplish in the face of superhuman difficulty, it is fair to assume the chance of his arriving at supreme achievement — as well as of grotesque failure.

II

Whatever might have been the possibilities of success or failure, it is evident that the man's whole existence was possessed, obsessed by the notion of making over life in an ideal mould. As Shelley said of himself, 'he was born with a passion for reforming the world,' and, by the way, one wonders what Shelley would have done, if the opportunity had come to him that came to Lenin. Never was there a man of whom Heine might have said more truly: 'No, we do not have ideas, the Idea has us, and

whips and scourges us into the arena, to fight for it until we die, whether we will or no.'

In this unyielding, unceasing fight for the idea, Lenin of course had to have instruments, men and women, and not the least curious element in the study of him is his attitude towards these instruments. Naturally he had a vast acquaintance with them. His nomad career had taken him into all sorts of society, had accustomed him to the habits and the manners of all classes of men. He mingled freely and constantly with the intellectuals, among whom after all he naturally belonged, but he was just as curious as to the common people and the workers, inquired minutely into their way of living and studied and analyzed their hopes, their desires, and their despairs. At the same time, all this human investigation was for a purpose. It was not a dispassionate scientific quest into the workings of the human heart, but a persistent classifying of all men according to their utility for the one great object. In other words, as with all Lenin's executive action, one of a somewhat different temperament is astounded at the serene self-confidence which could venture to translate the cloudy speculations of German metaphysics into concrete terms of palpitating human flesh and blood. All these flitting, fleeting, shadowy, manifold creatures were just simple incarnate bourgeois or the embodied proletariat: they were labeled, treated, employed, and to be disposed of merely as such.

The result seems to have been a considerable

contempt for mankind as a whole, a contempt much accentuated by the fundamental materialism and utilitarianism of the Marxian philosophy. 'I got the impression that he despises a great many people and is an intellectual aristocrat,' says so acute an observer as Bertrand Russell.[10] Naturally, as has been proved in human history over and over, such an aristocratic tendency is quite compatible with a profound pity and even tenderness for humanity and a persistent effort to benefit and improve it. 'It is understood, is it not?' says Edmond Scherer, 'that man is at once the most lovable and the most contemptible creature in the universe?'

And if Lenin had not a high opinion of mankind in general, he was no more enthusiastic about the large mass of his own countrymen. There may be some exaggeration in his reported saying, that 'for every honest Bolshevik there are thirty-nine scoundrels and sixty fools,' [11] but it probably represents the fruits of bitter experience in many respects. When Gorky asked him: 'Is it only my imagination, or do you really feel pity for people?' he answered: 'For the intelligent ones I am sorry. We have not many intelligent people: we are a gifted people in many ways, but lazy-minded.' [12] Whatever defects Lenin may have had, he was not lazy-minded, and those whose minds rush like a mill-race find it hard to be patient with the stagnant and the slow.

The curious, the interesting thing is, the patent contradiction between this general contempt for mankind as a whole and Russian mankind in par-

ticular and the fact that Lenin's whole theory of government, his complete political idea, rested on the intelligence and competence and utility of the masses for political ends. The working-class, the common people were to govern, were to show the despised and selfish bourgeoisie that they could govern, with intelligence, with honesty, with efficiency. They wanted good government, left to themselves they would have good government. Give them training, give them education, give them persistent, enlightened self-discipline, and they would work out the problem for themselves. If they could not, no one could.

In the mean time somebody must work it out for them. It is fascinating to watch the delicate and subtle process by which this *somebody* was gently insinuated into the working of the huge political machine which Lenin attempted to establish. First of all, it was to be the dictatorship of the proletariat. If you listened to his words and read his writings, you would suppose that the vast mass of the people in the factories and the fields were just taking over the machinery of government in their neatly graded soviets, or popular assemblies, and running it themselves for their own benefit. Then if you looked more closely, you would discover that the guiding force was the comparatively small Communist Party, perhaps half a million or so out of the whole hundred Russian millions. But all the force and inspiration of the said Communist Party originated in a small circle of controlling spirits, and at the

centre of these spirits, with his watchful eye on every movement and his guiding finger on every motive sat the one supreme authority, Nikolai Lenin, and the dictatorship of the Proletariat was just simply he and no one else.

But masses are made up of men, and must be treated individually, and no one knew this better than Lenin. From the time when he first went out into the world, he studied men and women, their motives, their passions, their capacities, and always, persistently, with a view to what they could do for the great Revolutionary goal. Innumerable brief observations and comments show how quick and how acute were his perceptions of human nature and human character. They were not always unerring, because his own prejudices and prepossessions sometimes misled him, but they were keen and they were merciless. 'How his eyes glitter; he looks right through one,' said a follower who came into close contact with him.[13] Take this characterization of his two leading supporters, stated soberly and deliberately in the ungarnished phrases of the Testament prepared just before his death: 'Comrade Stalin... has concentrated an enormous power in his hands, and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution. On the other hand, Comrade Trotzky... is distinguished not only by his exceptional abilities... but also by his too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs.' [14]

Lenin not only judged men, he managed them, and in his intensely practical mind the judgment was merely preliminary to the management. With different agents his methods were different. Some must be handled by a gentle and persuasive suavity, by a hand laid on the shoulder, a finger on the arm. Others required strict and systematic logical treatment: you must convince them before you could lead them. With others again it was necessary to be purely commanding. They must be told what to do without too much explanation and they would do it. And in the accomplishment of his great purpose no human means was to be despised or scorned. The Germans were the enemies of Russia, but if he could use their money or their support to save Russia, he would do it. Even the detested instruments of the old Czarist police might be utilized if they could be paid to work for him. But undoubtedly the climax of his human triumph was the making elements so antagonistic as Stalin and Trotzky act together in harmony, so long as he led them, though they split and severed as soon as his control was taken away.

Even more significant for Lenin than his friends are his enemies, and heaven knows he had enough of them; for he hated right and left, with a most magnificent heartiness. Dr. Johnson loved a good hater: he would certainly have loved Nikolai Lenin. To be sure, his friends and he himself insist that his hate was not personal: it was the enemies of his cause that he pursued with such flagrant vehemence. But

we all know that the hatred of creed and conviction is even more deadly than the hatred of personal revenge. To Lenin those who disagreed with him were malicious, wicked, and the eternal objects of detestation and loathing. The word *tolerance* did not exist for him. If you were not with him, you were against him, and he was against you with his whole soul. The Marxian antithesis between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat took hold of him early and never left him. The world was sharply divided into the two classes, and on the execrable bourgeoisie he could not pour out enough of his anger and contempt. Yet even so it seems as if he had still more indignation and scorn for those who had been his friends than for his life-long enemies. His hatred of the Kautskys and the Plekhanovs and the Martovs, who had been strenuous fighters in his own camp and then had diverged by some shade of theoretical difference, was the fiercest of all. They had betrayed the Cause, they disagreed with Nikolai Lenin: how could there be any good in them?

He not only hated, but he vilified. If one may trust translation, his language of abuse was as richly varied as it was offensive. Those who differed from him were not only traitors, they were little better than scoundrels. Nor did he stop at words. When power came into his hands, he used it mercilessly, as is too well known. The gentle methods of persuading and convincing were not, in his opinion, the instruments by which Revolution should triumph.

He had read Sorel on Violence not without profit. 'There are "revolutionaries,"' he cried, 'who imagine we should complete the revolution in love and kindness. Yes? Where did they go to school? What do they understand by dictatorship? What will become of a dictatorship if one is a weakling?' [15] He did not propose to be a weakling in that sense at any rate. And he shot and hanged and tortured and terrorized in the name of the Ideal.

It may be that the world must be made over from top to bottom. God knows in many respects it needs it. But is it necessary that the making over should be built on wrath, on hatred, and on revenge? Such was not the method of Jesus. But perhaps Jesus was thinking of a more practicable world than this.

III

So we have considered Lenin's attitude toward the various human instruments who could help him in his purposes. Now let us turn to their attitude towards him. No aphorism is more surely established by the course of history than that hate breeds hate. Impress upon large masses of mankind that you loathe them, despise them, and condemn them, and they will reciprocate the feelings with abuse as bitter and savage as your own. Lenin literature therefore is quite as highly colored with animosity against him as any that he poured out against his foes. 'Extreme cruelty expressing itself in pitiless massacres, in relentless resolution to destroy all the

world for his own personal reasons, is stamped upon these sinister features,' cries one furious adversary.[16] Another writes: 'To him human beings were as impersonal as himself. They were matters to be used or discarded as the need arose and if they stood in his way, they were to be ruthlessly removed: "Let ninety per cent of the Russian people perish, so long as ten per cent may live to see the world revolution."' [17]

And as they branded his cruelty, so they emphasized his utter unscrupulousness. The undeniable Oriental strain, the suggestion of Tartar origin, was supposed to give him an incurable underhandedness, a complete indifference to means, so long as the end could be attained. 'For Lenin moral principles do not exist, just as there is no music for a deaf person. And if one should discuss the subject with him, he would but laugh.... The expediency and not the ethics of his acts worries him. The words morality and humanity do not exist in Lenin's vocabulary.' [18] Such critics would apply to Lenin's disposition the words which he himself uses as to the Russian character in general: 'What is peculiar to Russia is the tremendously rapid transition from savage violence to most subtle deception.' [19]

On the other hand, if you listen to Lenin's friends and admirers, you wonder if they can be discussing the same person, and you have to delve deep down into the roots of the human heart to search for the hidden compatibilities. He was simple, they say, straightforward, his earnest, genuine bearing and

manner elicited confidence and at once rewarded it. Hear the words of one close to him, written shortly after his death: 'I know many comrades, now very important figures, who did not fear to lay before Ilyitch their most serious doubts. "One can say anything to Ilyitch," they said. And this is true. More than that, after the first few words with him, one feels an unusual simplicity and freedom. "One can tell Ilyitch anything."'[20]

Those who knew him, those who loved him, and many did, insist that he looked at things, looked at his great projects and ideals always from the human angle. As one of his followers puts it: 'He thought about living men, the peasant Sidor from Tver, the workman Onufri from the Putilov Works, the bobby on the street, and tried to imagine how the decisions in question would affect the peasant Sidor or the workman Onufri.'[21] When he was in far Siberia, he entered most intimately into the life of the people, studied their needs, studied their inarticulate desires, and when he became ruler over millions, he had all these needs and desires written in his heart.

His enemies declared that he viewed life only in mathematical formulas, that human passion and suffering were discounted. Yet there appear to be innumerable instances of his thoughtfulness for individuals. Gorky, when he was crushed by illness, was surprised to find Lenin turning aside from great matters of state to write him letters of sympathetic suggestion, and he adds: 'he probably wrote scores

of similar letters to all sorts of people.' [22] It is said that among Lenin's papers there are many documents which show this personal interest: 'One directs that a certain worker is to be supplied with food, in another Lenin asks for new clothes for one workman or tries to provide a house for another, or medical treatment for a third.' [23] No doubt the overmastering Idea came first, but it left room for a lot of human consideration behind it.

On one point friends and enemies are agreed, that is as to Lenin's vast, compelling influence over other men, though some regard the influence as beneficent and others as baleful. He could persuade, induce, allure. Even those who were hostile were somehow led to do what he wanted of them, almost before they knew it. 'He contrived to attach even political opponents to his service, if he needed them for their special abilities,' [24] says one good observer, and another puts it still more strongly: 'Nobody who has not seen Lenin or read his books can possibly imagine the force of that man's will and his intellectual authority.... Lenin took the whole responsibility for revolutionizing the Russian Empire, and the others faithfully and intelligently helped him as children help their father.' [25]

Again, he could put a compelling, commanding power into this treatment, could crush down opposing wills by sheer magnetic force. And in his use of this control I am often reminded of a very different figure, the American Evangelist D. L. Moody,

who dominated and crushed men with similar effect. There is the story of the somewhat rebellious comrade who kept alleging the glorious part he had taken in the Revolution of 1905. 'But Lenin took a step forward, not letting go my eyes, and said again, "Yes, comrade, but what are you doing for *this* revolution?" It was like an X-ray — as if he saw all my deeds of the last ten years. I couldn't stand it. I had to look down like a guilty child. I tried to talk, but it was no use. I had to come away.' [26] Needless to say that this man's will became Lenin's. Or again, there is the story of the workmen who were ready to break out in mutiny because of the proposed submission to the Germans. Lenin's friends urged that the only way was to shoot them down. 'Shoot them?' said Lenin. 'No! We will talk to them.' He had the leaders brought in, explained the position and his plans with the most sympathetic simplicity, showed them that the whole future of the Revolution depended on what he was doing, and left the decision — in appearance — to them: '"I have led the Revolution. I will not share in the murder of my own child. Comrades, what is your will?" "Lenin! Lenin! Lenin!" The room held no other sound. "Comrade Lenin! Comrade Lenin!" It was a judgment delivered. Having delivered it, the judges picked up their rifles and marched out of the room and down the corridor, still delivering their judgment: "Comrade Lenin!"' [27]

As he could deal with men individually, so he had

perhaps an even greater hold on them in the mass, could sway great bodies who heard or read his words in whatsoever direction he might desire. The accounts of his oratory are very curious. He certainly was not a magnetic speaker in the ordinary sense, had no flowing, golden periods, none of those overmastering effects which carry an audience off its feet for the moment, but afterwards evoke doubt as to their sincerity and their meaning. He was often heavy and awkward, especially at beginning. His short stumpy figure, his shiny bald head, his somewhat stolid features were anything but impressive. But as he went on speaking and warmed to his work, his simplicity, his earnestness, his intense direct appeal to the passions of his auditors began to take hold, and having taken hold once, they never let go. The conclusion of such a speech is vividly depicted by Trotzky: 'There in the glare of the electric lights the unique head stands out, surrounded on all sides by enormous waves of enthusiasm. And when it seems that the storm has reached its height, all at once, through the confusion, tumult and clapping, like a siren in a storm, a youthful voice, strained and enthusiastic, calls out: "Long live Ilyitch!" And from the inmost quivering depths of solidarity, love, and enthusiasm, rises the general cry, making the arches ring, "Long live Lenin!"' [28]

So there can be no doubt that this man was loved as ardently as he was hated, and he certainly impressed the shadow of his spirit upon the whole

vast empire of Russia, for good or for evil who shall finally pronounce? How great the impress was is evidenced in the adoration which surrounds his embalmed body, as it is preserved and exhibited to-day, making his canonized memory, his patriotic achievements, and his mythical figure almost the centre of a new religion, to replace the old, which he so vehemently demolished. Perhaps the most concrete expression of this developing worship is the tremendous eulogy registered in the pronouncement of the Soviet Congress at the time of Lenin's death: 'His vision was colossal, his intelligence in organizing the masses was beyond belief. He was the greatest leader of all countries, of all times, and of all peoples. He was the lord of the new humanity, the savior of the world.' [29] After which, one can but remember the thousands who were and are yearly being executed because they did not believe in Lenin or his ideas at all.

IV

So far we have studied Lenin in his public relations. Now let us turn to the consideration of his private and personal character and life, though he himself gives us little help in this, since he was always too busy and preoccupied for much self-analysis, at least in any records that I have discovered. 'He paid too little attention to himself to speak of himself to others,' says Gorky; 'he knew how to hide the secret tempests of his soul.' [30]

And first as to his personal dealings with human-

ity. In his family he seems to have been not only exemplary but attractive. As a child he was quiet and self-contained, an excellent, assiduous student, standing high in his classes in school and college, attentive to his duties, and not criticized in deportment except that his political tendencies made him an object of jealous watchfulness on the part of the government. He adored the dreaming, idealistic elder brother, who was executed. He was devoted to his mother as long as she lived, and he and his sister cherished a profound mutual affection.

I find extraordinarily little reference to Lenin's relation to women. There is no vestige whatever of early love affairs or any indication that women as such interested him in any way. No doubt there were marked exceptions to this — there are in most men's lives — but they have left no traces here. Lenin married at a mature age, but it seems to have been rather a matter of comradely friendship than of romantic passion. His wife was an ardent Socialist, like himself, and they were brought together by a common enthusiasm. She with her mother followed him to Siberia, when they were engaged, and her account of their Siberian life is full of interest. In their further erratic, nomadic career she did her best to make him comfortable and since his death she has borne loyal witness to his greatness and to his achievements. The most humanly characteristic anecdote that I have met with in regard to Lenin's matrimonial affairs, an anecdote which may or may not be true, is the story of the expiring

mother-in-law. Madame Lenin's mother was very ill and at the point of death. The exhausted daughter retired for a little while to get absolutely needed sleep, enjoining upon her husband to call her if there was any occasion. He assented, and worked busily at his writing. The old lady died, and still Lenin wrote. When his wife came back, she reproached him bitterly: 'I told you to call me if she needed me.' 'So I would have; but she didn't need you: she was dead.' [31]

Lenin had no children of his own, but like many self-contained men, General Lee for example, he was devoted to the children of others, loved to chat with them and play with them and devise sports for them. How touching is the picture of his last days, when even his obstinate persistence was inadequate to enable him to attend to his public duties and he was shut up with solitude and thoughts: 'Here in the large room the little children from the neighboring villages came to see Uncle Lenin, to sit on his knee, to turn head over heels on the carpet, to win a smile, to be petted, to get a present of an apple or a toy. The disarranged Christmas tree was still standing, with its beads, its candles, and its cotton-wool snow and frost — the last amusement of his little friends.' [32] Lenin had a singular tenderness for animals also, especially cats, liked to pet them and fondle them and play with them. Madame Lenin tells us that, though he was a keen sportsman, he once spared a splendid fox which was right under his gun, and when she asked him

why he didn't shoot, he answered, 'I couldn't: it was too handsome.' [33]

Stories were circulated, especially abroad, that Lenin made money out of his political advancement, or at least that he indulged himself in luxurious, extravagant, dissipated living. There seems no question but that this was utterly unjust. The man was too immensely absorbed by the one great interest of life to care for minor indulgences of any kind, indeed it seems as if he had little personal taste for such indulgences. Carrying out literally his political theory, that the highest officials should be paid just like ordinary working-men, he accepted only the most moderate salary, and his living-expenses were far within the limits of the salary he had. His household arrangements, his food and drink, were of the simplest and most primitive character, and his dress was often careless to the point of slovenliness. All sorts of presents were sent him, delicacies of every kind, and the peasants in their devotion brought the best they had to lay at the feet of their adored Ilyitch. He accepted the gifts with thanks and appreciation — and turned them over to the sick in the hospitals. There was no pretence about it: it was simply that his life was consecrated to more important things than amusement or revelry.

It does not appear that Lenin had any special attraction in ordinary social intercourse. Again, he was too preoccupied with larger things. He was absolutely simple and unostentatious, never gave himself the least air of greatness. Every one in-

sists upon this. But he had a constitutional propensity to argue, which does not contribute to the charm of social life. Also, he gave his interlocutor an uncomfortable sense of being penetrated to the very bottom. The idea seemed to be always to discover whether you were some one who might be useful to the Cause. If you were not, you would be civilly dismissed as soon as possible. Every one emphasizes his curious use of his eyes. He got close to you and seemed to be inspecting your inmost soul. As Bertrand Russell puts it: 'He looks at his visitors very closely and screws up one eye, which seems to increase alarmingly the penetrating power of the other.' [34]

I look in vain for any record of intimate, self-abandoning friendships at any time. Lenin had so-called 'comrades,' but they were comrades for the Cause, not for merely personal reasons. This spiritual isolation is well, if perhaps somewhat over indicated, in one account of his early life: 'Ulianov never prompted his neighbors, never permitted any of his classmates to copy his lessons, never helped any of them by any explanation of a difficult lesson. He was not liked, yet no one ever dared to teaze him. So he passed through all the eight years of the gymnasium, always alone, awkward in his motions, a wolfish light gleaming under his eyebrows.' [35] The last touch shows the animus of hostility, but the general drift is sufficiently significant of a nature at least remote from its fellows, if not estranged from them.

As it was with the more serious aspects of human fellowship, so it was also with the lighter forms of relaxation and amusement. Lenin had in some ways a natural zest for these things. His substantial health and his physical courage, which has been questioned but seems hardly questionable, also his passion for excelling in everything, inclined him to out-of-door sports. He was extremely fond of hunting, and both as a boy and as a man in Siberia skating was a delight to him. He was a great chess player at one time, worked out the printed problems with absorbed attention and developed the art till he could beat not only the members of his family but others much more experienced. Yet even as a boy, when he found that skating at night made him sleepy and dull over his lessons in the morning, he dropped the exercise at once. And as soon as he perceived that the contests of chess were distracting his thoughts from the mightier contests of the actual world, the allurements of the game were discarded forever. He had greater bishops and castles and pawns to handle than the puppet-figures of the chess-table.

But what interests and puzzles me most in Lenin's contact with his human surroundings is the question of his laughter. One meets it everywhere, in every quality of observer, both those who enjoyed it and those who were perplexed by it. 'He appreciated funny stories,' says Gorky, 'and laughed with his whole body, was really inundated with laughter, sometimes even to tears.' [36] He

laughed with his intimates, he laughed with strangers, he laughed when he was idle, and he laughed in great crises also.

What I want to get at is the significance of the laughter. His simpler admirers say that it was pure good-nature and joyousness. He was cheerful, whatever came: 'You see, nothing really worries him.' [37] Again, there is the possibility that the laughter was a convenient mask. He had a curious trick of putting his hand over his eyes and scanning an interlocutor through it. Perhaps the laughter served the same purpose. Or, in some natures, it might suggest an underlying detachment, the sense that even the great cause of World Revolution was a trifle and a jest in the light of infinity and eternity. But this seems quite out of the question in view of the mad earnestness of Lenin's customary political attitude. Another element of Lenin's laughter which impressed some keen observers was the suggestion of cruelty in it. This stands out in the account of Mrs. Philip Snowden, a by no means unsympathetic witness: 'It was the persistent, unnatural merriment of those amused eyes which gradually increased my distaste to the point of horror. What was there to laugh at in the whole wide realm of suffering Russia?... Here was a man who according to the Bolsheviki's own printed statement, had sent 10,000 persons to their death for the love of a political creed. When one of our number elicited his plan for dealing with obstinate rich peasants, he shook with horrid laughter as he spoke

of their hanging.' [38] And Bertrand Russell emphasizes the same thing: 'He...laughed over the exchange the peasant is compelled to make, of food for paper; the worthlessness of Russian paper struck him as comic.' [39]

This phase, of laughter, suggests a comparison with another Russian ruler, Catherine the Great. But Catherine had naturally a sweet, sunny, joyous temperament such as I cannot trace in Lenin at all. And again, the laughter suggests our own American Lincoln. Yet Lenin had none of Lincoln's tenderness, none of his distrust of himself, none of his profound, subtle, haunting melancholy, and it is precisely these elements that give the laughter of Lincoln its human warmth and richness. But if one attempts the comparison of Lenin with Lincoln, which in many aspects naturally suggests itself, one strays off into an endless field of conjecture as bewildering as it is delightful.

V

If Lenin subdued and eliminated the personal life in all external human connections, he did so even more in the inner intellectual and spiritual world. Art and æsthetic experience were never of much account to him. It is true that he was eager to see a proletarian painting, a proletarian theatre, and above all to take advantage of the new, mighty instrument of the moving pictures for proletarian propaganda purposes. But these things meant little in his own life, toys, trifles, gewgaws, beside the

manipulation of real men. Music did, indeed, sometimes take hold of him, did work on his nerves and unfit him for the terrible affairs he had on hand. Therefore music must be put out of his life. As he said to Gorky: 'I cannot often let myself listen to music: it acts on my nerves, makes me feel like talking foolishly and caressing the human beings who, living in hell, can create such beauty. Now, as things are to-day, you can't stop to caress people: they would bite your fingers off. You have got to hit heads right and left, to hit them pitilessly, though in the ideal, we are opposed to violence. Hum, hum, what a devil of a business anyway!' [40]

Though Lenin lived so much out of doors and came into contact with external nature at every possible point, I find almost no trace of sensibility to natural beauty, very rarely any reference to it whatever. The same is true of the Great Catherine except that one aspect of nature, the driving Russian winds, seems to have obsessed her. And also with Lenin there is one exception, in favor of the sea: 'Soon after this Lenin went for a month to Brittany, where his mother was living, because he wanted to see the sea. He had an extraordinary love of the sea, and could watch the play of the waves for hours: the sound of the sea soothed his nerves.' [41] It is charming to imagine the great Revolutionary, who had sat for hours in London beside the grave of Marx dreaming of the massacre of vile bourgeois, soothing his soul beside the lonely waves of Brittany.

Literature, regarded merely as an art, made little more appeal than other forms of the æsthetic. It is true, Madame Lenin repels the charge that her husband never read novels or poetry, and she gives a considerable list of authors whom he turned to in Siberia, Russian and others.[42] But his interest in them seems to have been largely in their bearing on the problems of life and politics which always appealed to him, and from the artistic or emotional point of view they probably touched him very little. If the germs of such things were born in him, he had crushed them and subdued them for so long that they were stunted and withered away, precisely as they gradually disappeared in Darwin.

Science in the abstract had little more interest for Lenin than art, though its logical processes were naturally somewhat akin to his intellectual activity. But applied science meant a great deal to him from its bearing on practical production and the welfare of the workers and it is one of his notable elements of originality that, while he attacked capitalistic society on the side of its economic organization, he recognized that its technical methods might well be of the utmost importance for a communistic state. He wanted to combine the practical energy and infinitely varied scientific ingenuity of America with the idealism of Russia and he is said to have gone even so far as the remark, 'A single technical expert is worth ten Communists.' [43]

Lenin's attitude towards philosophy was much the same as towards science. There were a few

years when he busied himself enormously with abstract speculation and in the preface to his book on 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism' he characterized himself as 'A seeker.' [44] But the tone of the seeker, the essential scientific spirit, was not in him in any respect, the long, patient, curious, tolerant research, wholly regardless of results. If he went into philosophy, it was as he went into everything else, with his mind made up and a furious determination to find what he already carried with him. The economic theory of Marx, which was the breath of life to Lenin, was built on philosophic materialism. Therefore philosophic materialism must be true, and a few years must be spent in proving that it was true, and especially and above all, in proving that all those who opposed it on any ground whatever were liars and cheats. They differed from Marx, they differed from Lenin, therefore they obviously were wrong, and the rich vocabulary of abuse must be exhausted in making this evident to them and to the world.

But by far the most significant, the most characteristic of all the elements of Lenin's inner life is his attitude toward religion, because this, like the others, but far more than the others, is interwoven with his whole political, social, and moral thinking. He regarded art and science with indifference. He regarded God with positive, furious animosity. God was the contemptible creation of the abject bourgeois, the last pitiful device of the sordid capitalist for keeping the unhappy proletarian in

slavish subjection. 'God is primarily a complex of ideas which result from the overwhelming oppression of man through external nature and class slavery; — of ideas which *fasten* this slavery to him, and which try to neutralize the class struggle.' [45] Again, even more vehemently: 'And God-creation, is not this the worst form of self-reviling? Every man who occupies himself with the construction of a God, or merely even agrees to it, prostitutes himself in the worst way, for he occupies himself not with activity, but with self-contemplation and self-reflection, and tries to deify his most unclean, most stupid, and most servile features or pettinesses.' [46]

The moral sanctions and supports of religion were of course swept away with the supernatural foundation, and the possible hopes, consolations, and compensations of a future life were easily disposed of in the same manner. Everywhere there is an aggressive, furious, if you like joyous and even laughing assertion that our souls are snuffed out, flung to the winds, with our bodies, and that heaven must be found or made right here on this earth, through the dictatorship of the proletariat, or it can never be found or made anywhere at all.

With many people who flaunt these bitter anti-religious affirmations it is possible to find some flaw, some crevice, some cranny of personal weakness or childhood memory, where a shuddering suspicion or at least a lingering regret creeps in. As Saint-Évremond puts it: 'The most ardent be-

liever cannot always believe, nor the most confirmed denier always deny.' But I have not come across the faintest evidence of any weakening in Lenin. God was his enemy from start to finish, and he hated him as if he were a capitalist and a bourgeois, as indeed he believed he was. Not from Lenin would ever have come a touch of sympathy with the whimsical last stanza of 'Exit God':

> 'I sometimes wish that God were back
> In this dark world and wide,
> For though some virtues he might lack,
> He had his pleasant side.'

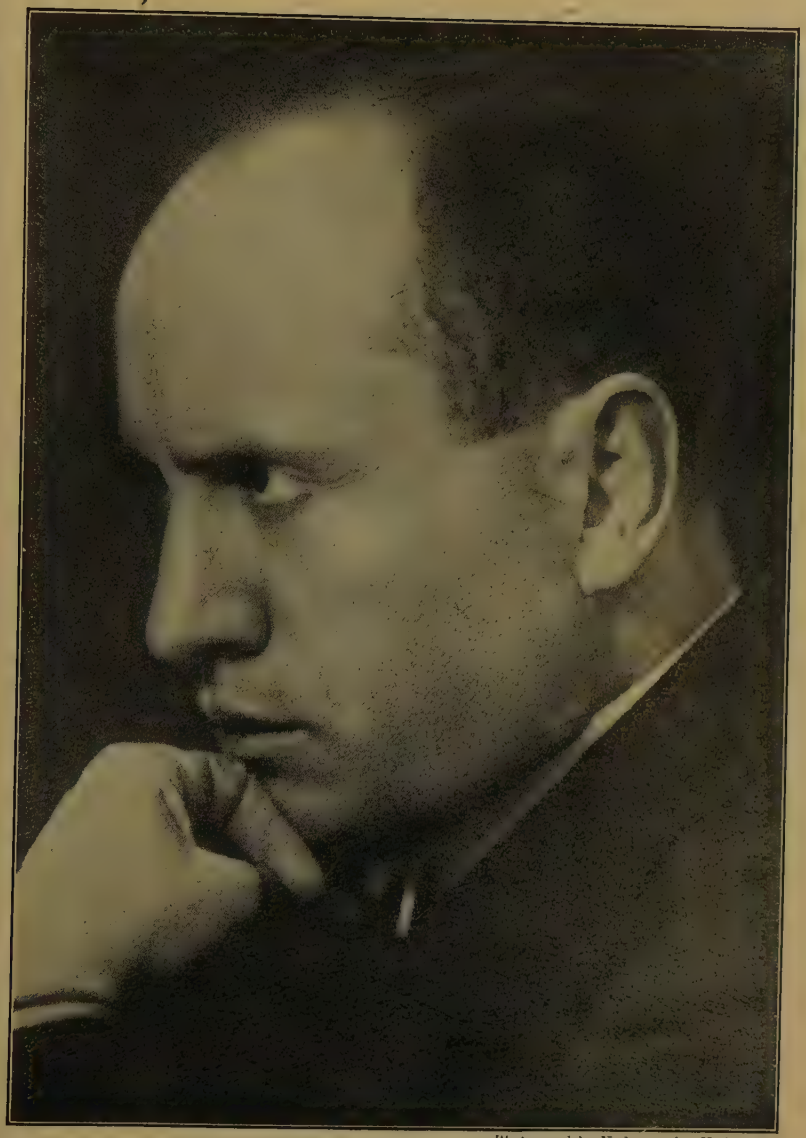
Thus, it seems as if Lenin had crushed, uprooted, got rid of the personal side of life altogether, had subordinated all the common hopes and desires of men in a supreme devotion to one ideal Cause which consumed and engrossed him entirely. Yet all the time you cannot help feeling that just that very devotion involved the most tremendous emphasis on the ego that is possible to man, in the acquisition, the assertion, the enjoyment of power and arbitrary dominion over other men. The whole study of Lenin is made fascinating by this bewildering and complicated tangle. And then through it all there is interwoven that strain of sardonic laughter, which I cannot quite explain or understand. So, as often with these great doers of the world, we are forced to end with a question. For doing, and life, and death, are merely a vast question, after all.

VI
THE WORLD AS WILL
BENITO MUSSOLINI

CHRONOLOGY

BENITO MUSSOLINI.

Born, Varano di Costa, July 29, 1883.
Wandering youth of poverty, exile, and confusion.
Socialist leader and editor, 1910–14.
Fascism initiated, 1919.
March on Rome, October, 1922.
Dictator —



Photograph by Underwood & Underwood

BENITO MUSSOLINI

VI

THE WORLD AS WILL
BENITO MUSSOLINI

I

Poor Democracy! The Radicals abuse it. The Conservatives abuse it. It does too much. It does too little. The economists dissect it, dissolve it, reduce it to terms below nothing. The columnists and cartoonists make rhymes and ribald drawings on it. And, worst of all, the great grave statesmen, who should be its most superb illustrators and exponents, toil day and night their very best to make it more ridiculous. Who can blame Lenin in Russia and Mussolini in Italy, for condemning it and spurning it like a dog that has had its day? And Mussolini cries out: 'Democracy has taken "style" out of the life of the people; Fascism has put back "style" into the life of the people; that is, color, force, the picturesque, the unexpected, the mystical; in short, everything which counts in the soul of the multitude.' [1] Or, again, 'I am a spirit too aristocratic not to feel disgust with the low trickery of the Parliamentary kitchen.' [2] Poor Democracy!

Benito Mussolini was born in the Romagna on July 29, 1883. His father was a sturdy blacksmith, and the boy had a rough and vigorous practical

bringing-up. But the father had also political interests and the devoted mother was a teacher, so Benito had intellectual education as well as practical, and profited by it. He was a teacher himself for a time, but the natural instinct for manipulating words and for manipulating souls made him a journalist and he led a stormy youthful life in the ranks of extreme Socialism. Conflict with the authorities drove him into Switzerland, where he passed some vagrant and Bohemian years. In 1904 he returned to Italy and became one of the editors of the Socialist paper, *Avanti*, in which he wrote vigorous and stirring articles. When the Great War came, in 1914, and the Socialists split into Nationalist and Anti-Nationalist factions, Mussolini stood for Italy, quarreled with his associates, and set up his own paper, *Popolo d'Italia*, with an energetic outcry for intervention on the side of the Allies. He himself served in the ranks, until he was severely wounded. Then he returned to his fighting with the pen. After the War he became thoroughly disgusted with the weakness of the Parliamentary régime and the lawlessness of the Radicals, and gradually he stood forward as the leader of the Fascisti, a sort of vigilance committees, who met revolutionary violence with decidedly rough and ready methods. Fascism spread all over Italy, in the desperate need of some sort of orderly government, and Mussolini more and more emerged as the head of it. In 1922 he persuaded or forced the King to accept him as nominal prime minister and practically absolute

dictator and ruler over all Italy, and such he has remained and, being only forty-seven years old, seems likely to remain for a good many years to come.

As with Lenin, and indeed with all these great men of action, one is tempted to ask oneself first of all, what was the fundamental impulse, the instinctive, dominating urge, at the back of this astonishing career. Again, as with Lenin, and in so many similar cases, the Duce's friends and admirers insist that he is not ambitious, that he wants nothing, seeks nothing for himself, but is first, last, and always animated by a zeal for the good of humanity and in particular for the advancement of his country. Mussolini himself frequently urges the same view, as in his Autobiography: 'I was certainly not moved by any mirage of personal power, nor by any other allurement, nor by a desire for egotistical political domination. I have always had a vision of life which was altruistic. I have groped in the dark of theories, but I groped not to relieve myself, but to bring something to others.' [3] And over and over again, everywhere, he identifies himself with, merges himself in, the grandeur and the glory of Italy.

But the experience is an old one, and history has had occasion to retell it a thousand times. You identify yourself with a great Cause, till you cannot tell what is the Cause and what is yourself. You are ready to sacrifice everything for it, yet in the end somehow the Cause and your own glory

and distinction cannot be torn apart. It is evident that from boyhood this man had an intense, an overmastering, a dominating personality, and such a personality asserts itself somehow, cannot live without such assertion. He might have been a writer, and had evident, eminent gifts for it. It is said that to this day an effective way of flattering him is to mourn that he gave up the literary career.[4]

But words could never have been enough for him. He was born above all with the restless, irresistible instinct for action, to be doing something, and more than that, to be doing something that would make him feel his grip on men, make them feel it, to wrest the world ever so little from its normal hideous course and make it aware that the wresting had been done by Benito Mussolini. Never for one instant was there conscious intention of doing evil for his own glorification. The welfare of humanity was an enormous, untilled field for the exercise of his magnificent gifts, and the extent of his beneficence was to be always the measure of his power. In this sense the thirst for power is excusably inexhaustible, it being of course assumed that the intelligence which guides it is as infallible as the power is limitless. Natures of this type rejoice to sum up their effort in words like Mussolini's: 'I had to see, oversee, and foresee everything. I slept not at all for some nights, but they were nights fecund in action and ideas.' [5] And if this sort of thing is not ambition, the difference is hardly worth noting.

With the intense and constant joy in action is

naturally connected, in Mussolini, as in Lenin, a supreme self-confidence which is bewildering to those whom Providence has mainly endowed with self-mistrust. To a spirit like Mussolini's there is an exuberant delight in making difficult, critical decisions. It is not merely the possession of power, it is the passionate assertion and exertion of power, that stamp you as being alive, and he joyously emphasizes the necessity of 'being always prompt to dare in individual life as in collective life and abhorring the slothful, the stagnant, the sedentary.' [6]

With the making of decisions goes the acceptance of responsibility, for the lives of others, perhaps of millions of others. Mussolini understands the burden, he feels the dangers that go with it: 'Certainly, if I do not succeed, it will be the end of me: this is not the sort of experiment that can be tried twice in a lifetime.' [7] But, as Mr. Child says, 'He takes responsibility for everything — for discipline, for censorship, for measures which, were less rigor required, would appear repressive and cruel. "Mine!" says he, and stands or falls on that.' [8]

And it is fascinating to observe, again as with Lenin, how intimately, inextricably, the personal eagerness and delight is intertwined with the Ideal, so that the actor may honestly persuade himself that the Ideal is all and self nothing. In Mussolini's way of putting it: 'I ask nothing for myself, nor for mine; no material goods, no honors, no testimonials, no resolutions of approval which presume to consecrate me to History. My objective is simple:

I want to make Italy great, respected, and feared; I want to render my nation worthy of her noble and ancient traditions.' [9]

What differentiates Mussolini somewhat from Lenin is the greater emphasis on the human will as an instrument in accomplishing these things. Perhaps he learned this emphasis from such teachers as William James, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche. It was more likely born in him. 'Life,' he says, 'for me is a battle, it is taking risks and enduring with tireless pertinacity.' [10] Will can make over the world, if you only see what you want and go after it with a persistence and a courage that nothing can shake or break. And he squared his solid shoulders, set that stern, imposing jaw, clenched his fists, and made the world feel what he was.

II

When we have established in Mussolini the thirst for power, it is profoundly interesting to watch his acquisition of it, which may seem in part fortuitous, but yet shows the deeper elements of determined will and strenuous effort guiding and moulding all through.

In those early years of struggle, when he was fighting solitude, fighting poverty, often fighting sickness, but always fighting, he was gradually gaining influence over the human souls about him, that influence which was the abiding need of his temperament and the crowning gift of his spirit. In the early days the influence was radical in the

extréme: 'To us, faithful to a dying individualism nothing remains in the miserable present and for the gloomy future but the faith, absurd if you like but consoling, of Anarchy.' [11] Capital was accursed, the State was the enemy of everybody. And the enthusiastic preacher was in prison as often as St. Paul. Gradually the emphasis shifted. The radicalism faded into Socialism, of a more and more conservative order, and this gave place to a nationalism which was centred and merged in the greatness of Italy.

Naturally such political acrobatics caused some astonishment at the time and have caused a good deal of criticism since. The Duce's enemies insist that his only sincere political belief is the belief in himself and the theory that he holds through thick and thin is the theory of his own advancement. His friends, and he himself more energetically than any of them, urge that he has not changed one jot in his sole, essential aim, which is always and unchangingly the welfare of humanity and particularly the welfare of Italy. He sees this welfare from different angles, with changing conditions and circumstances, and shapes his course accordingly. As he himself puts it, in his vigorous and picturesque fashion: 'Certain determinations seem unexpected to the great public, which cannot follow the gradual, subterranean transformations of a spirit restless and anxious to get to the bottom of problems which are always appearing in new forms. But the travail is there, intimate, profound, some-

times even tragic.' [12] Critics call him an Opportunist, as they do Lenin. But a far better word for Mussolini, as for Lenin, is Vitalist, and the Italian, like the Russian, is always insisting upon the overmastering importance of life. It is life that makes theory, not theory that makes life. Theory is well enough for spectacled professors. The statesman, if he is to keep his grip on men's hearts, must cling to life, must study it, keep in intimate touch with it, and mould his course by it always: 'It is necessary to have one's mind always attuned to change.' [13]

This development, this growth, this Vitalism are everywhere apparent through the days of Mussolini's War interest and activity. Daily he is adapting himself to circumstances, as he sees them, throwing aside old dogmas and conceptions, like worn-out shoes, seeking on all sides for some new solid ground to tread on, some firm leverage on which to base the instrument of his magnificent will which he is sure can make the world all over new. Then he hit upon the theory of Fascism (a system of Groups, based on the old Roman fasces, which were borne symbolically before the high magistrates), in itself just suiting him because it was a development, not a theory; he made it his own, and to this day claims the creatorship of it, for good or evil: 'This historical, political, and moral agency is something I have created by a propaganda which runs from the days of intervention until now.' [14]

From the elementary groups, banded together

locally, Fascism extended in a vast organization all over Italy. No doubt its purpose and action at first were largely negative, that is, directed to the suppression of radical and anarchical disorder and violence, which had become alarmingly prevalent immediately after the War. Also, the methods and especially the agents of Fascism were often as violent, as brutal, and as lawless as the agitators they were claiming to repress. Shocking stories are told of Fascist outrages, and Mussolini frankly and repeatedly admits the use of force, and even glories in it, being influenced by the somewhat academic raptures of his teacher, Georges Sorel. Only he is careful to distinguish between wanton, unjustifiable violence and that which is properly employed for lofty objects: 'Not a petty, sporadic, individual violence, which is barren and unprofitable, but the grand, the beautiful, the inexorable violence of the hours that are decisive.' [15] To the victims of Fascist brutality these distinctions may seem somewhat finespun.

But unquestionably, in Mussolini's mind, the negative side of his great movement was unimportant. What really counted was the unity, the greatness, the spiritual significance of Italy, and the effort to impress these on every living Italian everywhere. The Fascist movement has given rise to a cloud of speculative writers, whose elaborate and often contradictory theorizing can be curiously studied in the pages of Schneider's illuminating work. But the central element of

that movement is undoubtedly Mussolini himself. It is his eloquence, his enthusiasm, his passionate will, which give it vitality and power. When he cries, 'This is our formula: all in the State, nothing without the State, nothing against the State,"[16] one cannot help looking back to Louis XIV, *l'état, c'est moi.*.

Thus the supreme hour in the career of the blacksmith's son was that in which, after all the clatter and shift of falling ministries, there came the King's definite telegram, asking him to assume the post of prime minister, with the ensuing march to Rome in the autumn of 1922 at the head of his legions of black-shirted young warriors. After such a dramatic crisis and triumph, who can wonder at the vastness and the splendor of the nationalistic dreams which keep recurring in the midst of the sharp, incisive vigor of his speech: 'I who have the pulse of the Nation under my fingers, and diligently count the beats of it... I cherish more than a hope in my spirit, a supreme certainty, and it is this: that by the effort of its chiefs, by the will of its people, by the sacrifices of generations past and those to come, Imperial Italy, the Italy of our dreams, will become the reality of our to-morrow.' [17]

III

Thus we see Mussolini, in 1922, in possession of the supreme power, and practically the absolute ruler of all Italians. We naturally ask ourselves, what use he has made of this power in the years

since he has had it. As to the actual results of his government it is extraordinarily difficult to arrive at satisfactory conclusions. There is plenty of evidence, but unfortunately the evidence is completely contradictory according to the source it comes from. If you ask the Duce's friends and supporters, you will hear that Italy has been made over, rejuvenated from top to bottom, not only in fact, but still more in spirit. On the other hand, keen and observing critics, who at any rate profess to be impartial, discount these claims very largely, and assert that underneath the surface harmony, produced and maintained by tyrannical repression, there is a seething caldron of restlessness and discontent. One thing is certain, that if half that is claimed by the Mussolinians is true, either there was an extraordinary, enduring, solid fibre of national greatness in the Italian people or Mussolini has effected one of the most astounding spiritual revolutions ever achieved by man.

When we come to investigate, not what has actually been done, but what Mussolini is aiming at and what he himself asserts and perhaps believes he has achieved, the task is easier, for it is largely a matter of printed words. As regards internal conditions, he insists on the establishment of order as the prime necessity. Men must live according to law and respect it, if they are going to live together profitably at all. He insists on work and it must be admitted that he is an assiduous, and persistent worker himself, and always has been,

at least as to hours, though some dispute the intensity of the actual effort. He wants no idlers, no dawdlers, no parasites, and he has got rid of them with an amazing fearlessness and an amazing efficiency. He aims to bring industry to the highest point of production and usefulness, and he has framed a complicated system of industrial regulations which at least purports to dispose of labor troubles forever, though here again the critics carp.[18] Finance has been handled with the same quick, sharp, arbitrary methods of decision, though once more, according to the carpers, with the same ineffectiveness. Finally, as any such thoroughgoing reform must depend largely upon future generations, the dictator has gone straight at these by a radical reform of education. As in Russia, the future empire must be founded chiefly and solidly upon the ideas that are now being instilled into the boys and girls. And in general, it may be said that if edicts and prescriptions could make a well governed country, Italy, like Russia, would be a Paradise. Some persons, not usually the same, insist that they both are so.

Nor is Mussolini interested in the improvement of internal conditions only. He cares as much, perhaps even more, for raising the status of Italy as a nation. Like many Italians, he is bitterly sensitive to the fact that his country was once the seat of the greatest empire in the world but for the last thousand years has been regarded politically with indifference, if not with contempt. He wants

to make it once more an object of respect and fear, at least of serious consideration.

The first aid to this end is an increase in numbers. The Duce wants to raise the birth rate by every possible means. He is strongly opposed to emigration to other countries and endeavors to keep his control, both financial and military, over Italians who have emigrated, carrying this so far as to arouse anxiety and mistrust elsewhere, especially in the United States. He wants to establish colonies and fill them with devoted Italians. For this purpose he wants control of the Mediterranean and he intrigues busily among all the growing, shifting peoples who touch the Mediterranean shores. His dream is of a vigorous, united, encroaching, dominating Italy, which shall renew something, who can tell how much, of the imperial grandeur of Rome. One of the chief instruments of this imperial development he finds in the possibilities of the Catholic Church. In his early radical years he was the bitter enemy of the Church and apparently of God also. In his earlier writings the priesthood is fiercely attacked and he speaks of those 'two senescent institutions, the Papacy and the Empire.' [19] But this, like many other childish ideas, he put gaily behind him. The superb political organization of the Church and its hold upon Catholics all over the world make it the most magnificent agency for universal domination. Consequently Mussolini has bargained with it by making civil sacrifices which would lead Cavour

and Crispi to turn in their graves. Everything for a greater Italy, everything to revive the vanished glory of the old Roman past. Rome was an obsession to Mussolini from the first, as he himself admits: 'From the days of my earliest childhood Rome was an immense object in my soul, as it began to take hold on life. I have dreamed and suffered for the love of Rome, drawn to it with a homesick longing.' [20] And the longing takes more concrete shape in another of his impetuous outcries: 'The last century was the century of achieving our independence. The century to come will be that of asserting our power.' [21] Or again: 'I am desperately Italian. I believe in the function of Latinity.' [22]

Naturally, when you dream such dreams, you dream of the means of executing them, and Mussolini is a man of means even more than of ends. Whatever the object may be, it is certain that he has built up a powerful army, that he has developed the Italian fleet far beyond anything before imagined, especially in the more modern branches, and that above all he has given constant attention to the control of the air. And all these agencies are developed openly and confessedly with a view to possible fighting. Mussolini occasionally pays his respects to peace, treats it with lovely deference as a remote ideal. But to him this world is a place of struggle and warfare, always will be and must be, and the prizes and the supremacy and even the peace and comfort are the possession of those only

who have earned them by being ready to fight. 'Always it is the musket that wins.' 'I want to make of you a nation of warriors.' 'We must have more aeroplanes than any other nation, we must have enough aeroplanes to obscure the sun and to drown out the sound of the storms.' [23] And he sums it up solemnly: 'I swear ... that we, yesterday as to-day, and to-day as to-morrow, when it comes to a question of our country, are as ready to kill as we are to be killed.' [24]

Mussolini's methods of achieving internal and domestic reform are somewhat less sensational and are certainly more constructive and more appealing. The two words that he uses most frequently, in fact repeats over and over, are discipline and obedience, words not very popular in the twentieth century and certainly not in America. Mussolini's critics insist that discipline means a harsh and cruel repression, the absolute forbidding of free speech, the intimidation of free thought, and the exile or maltreatment of those who indulge in it. But some beneficial effects of the discipline are undeniable, and it must be recognized that in the Duce's intention at any rate, discipline is far more than repression, it is a vital, dynamic inspiration for making over life. 'I have not confined myself to giving merely an outward veneer or contour to Italian life; I wished to influence the very depths of its spirit.' [25]

An interesting example of this spiritual vivification is Mussolini's treatment of the subject of class hostility. When one is sick and weary of Marx's

and Lenin's reiteration of the bitterness of class hatred and the impossibility of class harmony, it is comforting to find Mussolini insisting on co-ordination and coöperation. There are no classes, there are simply human beings, men and women. We should struggle to break down barriers, instead of building them up, to bring human souls together by making them understand instead of hate each other. Here again the Radical critics urge that Mussolini is insincere and that under the guise of humanity he has from the beginning simply played into the hands of the big capitalists, sacrificing the working people to them at every point. It may very well be that he is attempting the impossible and aiming at what can never be achieved. It may be that in doing this he will defeat the cause he desires to serve. But surely there is something noble in the Duce's own dream of what he has accomplished, even if the dream goes far beyond the reality: 'From petty discords and quarrels of holiday and Sunday frequency, from many-colored political partisanships, from peasant strifes, from bloody struggles, from the insincerity and duplicity of the press; from parliamentary battles and manœuvres, from the vicissitudes of representative lobbies, from hateful and useless debates and snarling talk, we finally climbed up to the plane of a unified nation, to a powerful harmony — dominated, inspired, and spiritualized by Fascism. That is not my judgment, but that of the world.' [26]

IV

Now as to the instruments which Mussolini uses to establish and consolidate his power, the men and women over whom he rules and without whom his dominion would be insignificant and meaningless.

Though the Duce even yet is far from an old man, few have had a vaster or more varied acquaintance with human life. His journalistic experience, his vagrant political wanderings, his army adventures, all have taken him into different spheres of human activity, and in all of them his observation has been acute and his interest unfailing. As he himself says of one phase: 'I found my recreation in the trenches studying the psychology of officers and troops. Later on that practice in observation became invaluable to me.' [27] For a ruler of men nothing is more important than to understand them.

It is curious that, as with Lenin, who also professed to be a great benefactor, the result of Mussolini's observations appears to be anything but favorable. He is interested in men and women. He may perhaps say that he loves them. But it does not appear that he has a very high opinion of them. It is the old story of the idealist who expects so much that he is disappointed when he finds comparatively little. After analyzing elaborately the bitter judgment of his idol Machiavelli on his fellows, 'Men never effect good actions save from necessity,' and the incidental conclusions, the twentieth-century ruler adds: 'If I were allowed to

judge my fellows and my compatriots, I could not attenuate in the least Machiavelli's verdict. might even wish to go further than he.' [28]

But men may be pitied even if they cannot be admired. They can also be helped, and above all they can be used, especially by means of the very weaknesses which the shrewd observer notes so keenly. Early and late Mussolini set himself to use great and little, strong and weak alike, and to adapt them with cunning and persistent ingenuity to his purposes. As the years went on, he gradually established a vast hold upon the Italian masses. He did this first by his writing, which was sometimes violent and highly colored, but almost always acute, forcible, calculated to touch just the points that would appeal to those whom he desired to reach. When it came to stirring the people by word of mouth his power was even more manifest. In a sense he is not a great showy orator, a Daniel Webster, or a Burke. He has no swelling periods or resonant phrases. But he has sharp, strong, hammered sentences that strike home. What has especially interested me is that I find his speeches self-revealing. Generally oratory is barren, arid, for the psychographer. But, as with Wilson, I have got more significant material from Mussolini's speeches than from almost anything else. I can understand how he sways multitudes when I feel how he sways me.

And if he has power over masses of men, his power over individuals is equal and unquestionable.

Sometimes he controls them by mere force and authority, with a dominating egotism which seems like bullying. 'He reserves his greatest severity for those whom he esteems: it is always a sign of his favor and affection when "he treats people badly" — so he himself says.' [29] Again, he can be persuasive, winning, almost wooing, when he wills. And by all these devices, by every method of attaching and attracting and subduing, he succeeds in securing an unbounded and undying devotion, as an enthusiastic admirer puts it, 'that instinctive desire to obey and serve which is so remote from servility, which is, indeed, one of the loftiest and most sacred of human instincts. It has in it a religious element.' [30]

Naturally the most interesting and puzzling of Mussolini's human political relations is that with his sovereign. But it is extremely difficult to get at the facts. One set of observers insist that the minister really feels the respect and deference that he professes. Another set urge the precise opposite. In any case it seems probable that Victor Emmanuel, who has all the discreet intelligence of his ancient house, thinks a good many things about his great minister that he does not say.

Clearly there are individuals whom Mussolini can neither conciliate nor dominate. He has enemies and bitter ones, who have to be disposed of somehow. If you accept his own version of the matter, he is extraordinarily gentle and lenient: 'It was only by my great authority that I averted

the destruction, not only rhetorical but also actual, of my most rabid enemies. I saved their skins for them.' [31] The accounts and comments of the said enemies are not quite so favorable. The case of Matteotti, who was kidnapped and murdered in 1924, is of course the extreme instance of what has happened to Mussolini's opponents. Few have openly charged the leader with direct complicity in this affair, and he himself brings forward the obvious argument that the murder was the most disastrous thing for him that ever happened. In the same way the execution of the Duc d'Enghien was ruinous to Napoleon. Yet he ordered it, and it seems certain that the Matteotti affair was managed by those who were in Mussolini's intimate confidence. At any rate, it is not denied that persons who oppose the dictator's plans and wishes are driven out of the country, when they are not imprisoned or actually maltreated. And Mussolini himself repeatedly proclaims his contempt for the Christian doctrine of loving our enemies: 'We must do all the good we can to our friends and inflict all the harm possible on our enemies.' [32]

An even more interesting point in this human connection is, how far Mussolini depends upon and uses others for advice and assistance and suggestion. Here again, if you listen to him, you will survey him in a proud and quite uncompanioned isolation: 'now long-continued experience is there to prove that I am a person absolutely refractory to pressure of any kind whatever. My decisions

often mature by night, in the solitude of my spirit and in the solitude of my life, which is almost arid from its extreme unsociability.'[33] Others, some others, take a different view, and at least one observer, who has studied the dictator fairly closely, insists that his power is in his execution and in stern, persistent will, rather than in the initiation of ideas, and that for his system, or rather very varying systems, of policy, he is indebted to the wiser and shrewder heads about him.[34]

If this is the case, he is extraordinarily skilful in concealing it, and indeed the same observer points out that in making use of the ideas of others Mussolini first tests them with extreme care and then manages to engross them entirely to himself, taking pains to see that the silence of the adviser is suitably rewarded. The constantly and undeniably impressive thing is this engrossment, whatever may be behind it. Everywhere and always it is Mussolini who does everything, Mussolini who works, Mussolini who thinks, Mussolini who is saving Italy. When his followers grow restive, they are brought to terms at once: 'Hands in the pockets! I am the only one that must have his hands free.'[35] All that happens, happens by the will of Mussolini. The responsibility, the burden, the power — and the glory are his: 'There is to be no discussion whatever as to internal politics. What is done is done by my precise and direct will and under my definite orders, for which the sole and entire responsibility is mine.'[36] Which would

seem to turn the common run of us into pawns and counters.

V

But no life, not even Mussolini's, can be all power, whether power of brains or power of hand, whether power of rule or power of money. There must be some diversion, distraction, repose. Yet it seems as if Mussolini's life, like so many of these lives of action, had about as little as possible of these things.

He himself tells us that he was a wayward, solitary, and violent child, and no one seems disposed to contradict him. His wise and loving mother subdued the natural tendencies to some extent and he cherished a deep devotion for her. His father he revered. They shared the same lofty humanitarian aspirations, and as a boy he took part in the labors of the forge, though, as he himself tells us, 'Whereas my father beat out hot iron on the anvil, my own task is the more difficult one of moulding souls.' [37] There is little evidence that the joyous, care-free sports and amusements of boyhood ever meant much to him.

His relations with women seem to be among the things that the Duce takes pains to have covered up, which makes one imagine that they might be interesting and instructive. It is remarkable how lightly the official biographers pass over all family matters. Mussolini himself tells us that his family 'always has represented to me an oasis of security

and 'refreshing calm.' [38] But it would appear that these were not things of any particular importance. Cynical and gossiping observers report that the Duce's marriage was the legalizing of an irregular connection which had already produced two children. There are also accounts of another establishment. And it is said that Signora Mussolini is mainly relegated to the country estate, which is no doubt 'an oasis of security and refreshing calm,' while her adventurous husband, from the top of the Seven Hills engrosses the wide world and incidentally a few other ladies. But all these things belong to what Mussolini covers in his remark that 'every man has secrets and shady nooks that are not to be explored.' [39]

On one point Mussolini, like Lenin, has the solid testimony of enemies and friends alike, he is indifferent and wholly incorruptible in the matter of money. More or less plausible charges of graft and thievery are brought, as in Russia, against minor agents. But the protagonist is thinking of something vaster than mere sordid financial acquisition. Mussolini's early years were passed in unspeakable hardship and privation, sometimes reaching the point of actual lack of food. The hardships were so great that, perhaps combined with recklessness of living, they permanently injured his health. He then formed the habit of going without things, not only luxuries but even comforts, and the habit has stuck by him. He is indifferent to food, indifferent to drink, indifferent to mere elegancies of living.

The compliments which he is so ready to pay himself would perhaps come with a better grace from some one else, 'Nobody has ever denied that I am possessed of these three qualities: a discreet intelligence, a lot of courage, and an utter contempt for the lure of money,' [40] but it is universally admitted that they are deserved, and among other instances his biographer points out that when he gave up the editorship of *Avanti*, he not only refused the salary due him but also 'the grant of some thousands of lire which had been voted to him for his efficiency.' [41]

As to general human relations, there is very little sign of pure pleasure in them. Every one seems struck with the singular isolation of the man. He has no friends, and what is still more singular, in contrast to Wilson's longing to be loved, he wants none. His intimate biographer says: 'He calls no one friend. "If the Eternal Father were to say to me: 'I am your friend,' I would put up my fists to him," he is capable of declaring in angry mood. And when some case of perfidy or treachery has come before him he will exclaim: "If my own father were to come back to the world, I would not place my trust in him."' [42] He does not seek even human relaxation. Sports he cultivates and approves because they mean bodily vigor. He likes to fence, to drive a car, to fly. But amusements as such he rejects with almost Puritanic contempt: 'I do not drink. I do not smoke, and I am not interested in cards or games. I pity those who lose

time and money, and sometimes all of life itself in the frenzy of games.' [43] One cannot imagine him in really genial, careless, oblivious chat, though it is said that he does sometimes abandon himself to play with children. Nor is it conceivable that he should have a sweet and sunny humor; mockery, ridicule, and bitter satire, perhaps, but sunshine, no.

As to intellectual life and interests, if you accept his own statement, his reading is vast and his acquaintance with all aspects of thought broad and solid, though at the same time he assures us that 'For myself, I have used only one big book. For myself, I have had only one great teacher. The book is life — lived. The teacher is day-by-day experience.' [44] He gives us a lengthy list of authors who have enlightened, if not influenced him. But it may be questioned how thoroughly he has mastered these authors, or any others. Action is his existence, and those who love thought only for its bearing on action are not likely to probe it to its most seductive depths.

Nor would it appear that Mussolini's emotional life is much more substantial than the intellectual, that is from the interior point of view. One element of the æsthetic does seem to afford him more relaxation than anything else, that is, music. He loves his violin, and though even he does not claim that he is a master of the instrument, he finds it a relief for his feelings and a resource in his difficulties. Also, there are a good many scattered

touches which seem to show a sensitive, if not an abiding, appreciation of natural beauty. These touches appear here and there in the early imaginative writing and also in the War Diary. And a similar sensitiveness shows in the regard for animals, whether lions or cats, which seems to have elements of real tenderness as well as of bravado.

Mussolini's religion has the same strains of complexity as his other emotional interests. I will not guarantee the outcry of his youth, in which he rivaled the performances of Mr. Sinclair Lewis: 'Fellow-workers, if within five minutes, God does not strike me down, I have demonstrated to you that he does not exist.' [45] But there seems to be little doubt as to the aggressive irreligion of this early period. Yet all the while there is a suggestion of mysticism, of an uneasy consciousness of elusive possibilities, which makes the inconsistency of accepting and supporting the Church a little less difficult and inexplicable than some of the Duce's other inconsistencies.

VI

But God is in the other world. In this world is Mussolini and Mussolini is almost the whole of it. The interesting question is, how intensely and keenly does he relish and enjoy the possession of power?

If you believe his friends and followers, you will assume that, like Lenin, he is really indifferent to all the show and parade, dislikes it, avoids it, shuns

it. Signora Sarfatti says: 'Men are necessary instruments, therefore they must be won over, but he despised and avoided the plaudits of the crowd. He had need of popularity, but suffered from it.... He fled from applause with the haste others show in seeking it.' [46] It is said that if he has to appear in public, he effaces himself, puts others forward, lets kings and ministers and soldiers have the prominent position, and is himself content with being useful. Just so it was said that Napoleon detested public ceremonies. Just so the same Napoleon dressed his marshals in gold and feathers and he himself rode obscurely in the midst of the glittering crowd, a little man, in an old military coat. All which only made the little man more conspicuous and impressive.

Even in Signora Sarfatti's eulogistic biography the deeper tendency and instinct peeps out, as in her account of one public appearance: 'Wearing the black shirt with, over it, a scarf marked with the colors of Rome, he sat there proudly, the admired of all admirers, on his beautiful chestnut, leaning forward now and again to caress it with his hand.' [47] Perhaps there is some human nature left here, after all. Less friendly but very acute observers, numbers of them, insist that the Duce is far from being averse to publicity in its crudest forms, even that he gives a good deal of thought to it, and cherishes and exhibits a vanity which would distinguish him from Lenin more than anything else. He is said to like resplendent uniforms and to appear constantly

in new ones, and no movie star is more joyously responsive to the calls of the camera: 'Cameras, dozens of them, follow the Premier wherever he goes. As he moves, he takes pains to give opportunities for good photographs.... He is the most photographed man on earth.' [48]

Needless to say that Mussolini himself does not admit any such taste for notoriety or popular applause. Over and over he repeats his contempt for these things and his disgust at adulation and the fawning flattery of the herd: 'I who do not love ceremonies and often undergo them merely as a wearisome duty.' [49] Yet even in his denial the cunning element of self-praise, in which he is certainly a mighty and agile expert, creeps in, and he manages to commend himself when asserting that he scorns commendation. Sometimes the self-praise burst out frankly, as in regard to the Grand Council: 'The Grand Council has always succeeded. I preside over it, and let me add, as a detail, that all the motions and the official reports, which have appeared in the papers in concise form, have been written by my hand.' [50] But it is quite as evident and quite as overwhelming when it is concealed: 'I am not intoxicated with grandeur; I should like to be intoxicated with humility.' [51] Perhaps he is; it is so hard not to be intoxicated with something.

However it may be as to the external trappings and paraphernalia of power, there can be no question as to the man's enjoyment of the substance of

it. The enjoyment is manifold, enduring, and vital. In all his varied self-revelation there is hardly a gleam of weariness, satiety, or disgust. At rare moments the vast sense of responsibility gives him a feeling of oppression and fatigue, but the rebound from this only urges him the more to 'call up all my forces and summon all my will, keeping before my spirit the needs and the interests and the future of my country.' [52]

Much less is there any evidence of general depression or discouragement, and this is notable in such a highly nervous temperament. He himself often confesses a tendency to pessimism, a disposition to look on the dark side of things, and it is said that in the early days, after the great war-disaster of Caporetto, he was for a time completely prostrated. If so, he seems to have toughened himself, for in later years he swept triumphantly through difficulties and crises which might well have crushed even a buoyant temperament to the earth.

The cure for satiety of power, for doubt of power, at least with a soul like Mussolini's, is more power, to be ever asserting yourself, testing yourself, as was said of Sarah Bernhardt, to be finding out what you cannot do and then going and doing it. Mussolini once murmured, with a sigh: 'Oh, how I long for that sense of satisfaction one gets from finishing one's job — finishing it once and for all! My labors of Sisyphus have no end.' [53] But all the while he well knew that the end of the job would be the end of him. The true man leaps out far more in the cry

for the largest possible life: 'No, it is the thought, the realization that I no longer belong merely to myself, that I belong to all — loved by all, hated by all — that I am an essential element in the lives of others: this feeling has on me a kind of intoxicating effect.' [54] But it may be doubted whether it is the intoxication of humility.

So, all through the man's life, as with Napoleon, runs this strange tangle of dream and reality, of the hardest, closest grip on fact with the maddest reveries of the possible and the impossible, and in the same way self is inextricably intertwined with not-self in a fashion that not even a much acuter analyst than Mussolini could ever finally untwist: 'The creation of the Fascist state and the passing of the hungry moments from sunrise to the deep profundity of night with its promise of another dawn eager for new labors, cannot be picked apart. I am lockstitched into this fabric. It and myself are woven into one. Other men may find romance in the fluttering of the leaves on a bough; as for me, whatever I might have been, destiny and my own self have made me one whose eyes, ears, whose every sense, every thought, whose entire time, entire energy must be directed at the trunk of the tree of public life.' [55]

VII

Of all the curious questions connected with Mussolini the most curious is that as to the future of his power, whether he lives or whether he dies.

But if it is difficult to ascertain the facts as to what he has been and done, it is impossible to conjecture what he may do. The grandeur of the Duce's conception of a united, harmonious, industrious, prosperous, puissant, imperial Italy cannot be denied; but that conception seems rather lamentably infirm, since it hangs upon the will of one man, and rather lamentably fragile since it depends upon one man's life. And certainly no insurance company would regard Mussolini's life as a very promising risk. The wonder is that, with the bitterness of feeling against him and the Italian habit in such matters, he was not assassinated long ago.

Mussolini himself professes to take the danger very lightly and to have perfect assurance that he will be preserved to do his work: 'The bullets pass, Mussolini remains.' [56] He assures us repeatedly of his flawless, magnificent courage and of his complete indifference to peril of his life. Some of those who look on enlighten us much more as to the extreme precautions that are taken, the guards that are posted, and the watch that is constantly kept to see that Italy does not lose the one man who is so precious to her. Even so, it seems as if any day might see that astonishing career brought to a sudden, fatal termination.

In that case, what will happen? No one appears to throw much light on the point, least of all Mussolini himself. Always there is the almost superstitious reliance on providential care: 'Nothing can happen to me until I have fulfilled my mis-

sion.' [57] Apparently he is contented to get the machine working perfectly, so far as he can, and then trust that it will go on working forever, as it should. Those who have observed him carefully, at least some of them, insist that while there are certain obvious candidates for the succession, any one of real power and promise is carefully kept at arms' length and the first thing demanded of a subordinate is that he should be subordinate. As indeed appears in the remark: 'My successor is not born. For fifteen years, at least, I will stay where I am.' [58]

Probably the last sentence contains the clue. The man is still in the prime of life, and with his intense vitality, his unfailing instinct of pressing forward, his strange faculty of mingling reality and dream, which I have already emphasized, he is content to envisage vast possibilities in the future, in which he shall go striding on and on, ever enlarging his ideal as he fulfills it. In this ideal and the dream of developing Italy it seems as if foreign war must necessarily occupy a considerable place. Indeed Mussolini's own declarations or insinuations on the subject, sometimes masked and sometimes retracted, but constantly renewed, seem sufficiently indicative and confirmatory on this point. But here again curious speculation arises. If war does come, will the Duce take the field himself as general in chief? If he does, the risk seems tremendous. Can a man of fifty, utterly untrained in such matters, all at once become a great commander? There is the enticing example of Cæsar

and also of Cromwell. But what if he fails? On the other hand, if he remains safely in Rome and sends his generals to fight for him, either they will be inferior men, who will come to grief, or if they are successful and triumphant, what is likely to happen to the Duce?

All these warlike considerations naturally bring up the memory of the great military leaders and dictators whom Mussolini seems to take as his models. And then we realize that not one of them, not Alexander, not Cæsar, not Cromwell, not Napoleon, left enduring power behind him. Cæsar was fortunate in having a member of his family to take up the work later, after a period of utter chaos. But not one of these great rulers could develop or perhaps would tolerate a great man beside him who would carry on his work, and the result was total and fatal collapse and ruin after them.

From such reflection one turns with a certain reminiscent tenderness to the Liberty and the Democracy which Mussolini eschews and rejects with contemptuous scorn. For there are still some who love Liberty with a big L, in spite of all its contradictions and inconsistencies, remembering that Cavour, whom Mussolini reveres and who was perhaps the greater man and the greater Italian of the two, used the magnificent phrase, 'I am the child of Liberty and to Liberty I owe all that I am.' There are still some who love Democracy, in spite of all its failures and blunders, remembering that Abraham Lincoln, who may have been as great as

Mussolini, loved it and believed it held the future of the world. As so often happens, men expected too much of Democracy, that it would make them over and make them different, and they were fooled by their own illusions, as they will be again. They found that representatives represent first of all their own selfishness, that legislatures are arid and commonplace and swamped with windy talk, and they were aghast at the hopeless incompetence and what Whitman calls 'the never ending audacity of elected persons.' Seeing all this, men cry, 'Democracy has failed us, has crumpled in our hands. Let us throw it away and ask somebody to govern us who knows how.' They forget that mankind has been wrestling with the problem of government for a hundred thousand years or more and has made precious little headway. Democracy, working through a gradually extended suffrage by means of representative government, has been tried for little more than a century. It is an experiment, still in its infancy, bound to stumble and falter and blunder for many years to come. The one overwhelming argument in its favor is that in a hundred thousand years mankind has not found anything permanently better and certainly not in the arbitrary, monarchical tyranny and despotism of Lenin and Mussolini.

VII
THE GENIUS OF THE AVERAGE
CALVIN COOLIDGE

CHRONOLOGY

JOHN CALVIN COOLIDGE.

Born, Plymouth, Vermont, July 4, 1872.
Graduated from Amherst College, 1895.
Married Grace A. Goodhue, October 4, 1905.
Member Massachusetts General Court, 1907–08.
Member Massachusetts Senate, 1912–15.
Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, 1916.
Governor of Massachusetts, 1919–20.
Vice-President, 1921–23.
President, 1923–29.

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CALVIN COOLIDGE

VII

THE GENIUS OF THE AVERAGE CALVIN COOLIDGE

I

It is an immense advantage to a public man to have a reputation for silence and the dangers of free speech to a politician have been often enough demonstrated. The Blaines, the Roosevelts, the Gladstones have a glorious gift with the tongue, but it sometimes gets them into trouble. The Washingtons, the Clevelands, the Coolidges thrive by silence. For the silence always suggests mystery and vast uncomprehended intellectual depths, which may be there and may not.

Calvin Coolidge was born on the fourth of July, 1872, in the little mountain village of Plymouth, Vermont. His family on both sides struck its roots right down into the heart of New England. There was the New England habit of labor, the sturdy endurance of hardship and privation, the thrift, the self-denial, the dominating conscience, the instinctive sense that all amusement was frivolous, if not dangerous. Calvin had a simple, solid education, by which he profited moderately. He went to Amherst College, studied and practiced law in an office in Northampton, worked his way into politics and swept up steadily through all the

political degrees from the lowest to the highest. One never tires of dwelling on the tremendous contrast between the primitive parlor in the New England farmhouse in which, by the pale light of a kerosene lamp the father administered to the son the presidential oath, and the palatial splendor of the residence of the greatest ruler in the world. No doubt the contrast has been always present to Mr. Coolidge himself and has always filled him with astonishment.

It cannot be said of course that this extraordinary career has been built entirely on silence. Coolidge has plenty of words at his command when they are called for. His speeches and messages show an abundant and sometimes wearisome fluency. He can say what he wants when he wants as he wants. But he also keeps still when he has nothing to say and most of us would find that this left a terrible void in our habits of conversation. Furthermore, he has what has justly been called a significant silence. His complete absence of speech often suggests more than others' rippling multiplicity of words. He exemplifies the delicate remark of the French dramatist: 'The charm of your conversation consists not only in what you say, but still more and above all in what you don't say.' [1] And though no doubt Coolidge has sometimes had occasion to deplore his difficulty of expression or lack of small talk, he is well aware of the advantage that the habit of silence gives him, appreciates it, develops it, and has at times insisted on it with

great effect. 'I have never been hurt by anything I didn't say,' he once observed. And elsewhere he somewhat amplifies to the same effect the exquisite saying of the 'Imitation': *Nemo secure loquitur nisi qui libenter tacit*: 'He who gives license to his tongue only discloses the contents of his own mind. By the excess of words he proclaims his lack of discipline. By his very violence he shows his weakness.' [2]

I have long studied the photographic portrayals of Coolidge's face, though I have never seen the reality. Even with the utmost sympathy of contemplation it is hard to find power in it. There is no suggestion of quick and eager response. It is a pinched, drawn face, certainly not hard but anxious, the face of a man perpetually confronted by a problem a little too big for him. One thing may be said, the face has New England written all over it. It seems to me at moments that I detect some shade of the Indian strain of ancestry, which biographers generally pass over, but which Mr. Coolidge himself frankly admits. The truth is, there was a curious affinity in some respects between the early Puritans and their Indian neighbors. There was the same silence, the same stoicism, the same grim and bare acceptance of hard reality. Indian or not, there is no question but that Mr. Coolidge sums up in himself these marked qualities of New England inheritance. And it seems a strange thing that, when the country as a whole has outgrown New England, has

taken to laughing at it or forgetting it, an unexpected turn of fortune should have made not only a son of New England but an absolute incarnation of New England the ruler over all America.

II

It is extremely difficult to trace and analyze the finer currents and movements of intellectual and spiritual life under this habitual aloofness and remoteness; but the broader outlines may be laid down without much trouble. Coolidge's intellectual training was on the whole ample and varied. The teaching in the better country academies fifty years ago was not very broad but it was substantial. At Amherst he came into contact with men of real originality and power and he responded to those who gave the historical and human suggestion which was the thing that chiefly appealed to him. In one of the surprisingly neat and forcible phrases which he sometimes turns out he states what education meant to him: 'After all, education is the process by which each individual recreates his own universe and determines its dimensions.' [3] He was not especially concerned with facts of science or achievements of literature. But the working of human nature in history and government meant something to him and whatever he acquired about it he instinctively stored away for future use.

It does not appear that he read much for pleasure. Novels never seem to have appealed to him at any stage of his career. He read extensively and

in earlier years a considerable variety, but he probably read slowly so that he did not cover much ground in proportion to the time, and as years went on the reading was almost entirely restricted to books of history and government. A good deal has been made of the reference to the Classics in his Autobiography. To me this reference sounds more like the respect of one who reveres afar off than with any intimate daily acquaintance. Scientific matters seem to have attracted him very little. He is supposed to have studied philosophy assiduously with Garman at Amherst. Garman is said to have taught him and others a remorseless regard for truth and a habit of thinking things through to the end. But I see no signs anywhere of any profound philosophical training or activity. He was mainly occupied with 'recreating his own universe and determining its dimensions.'

If Coolidge did not spend much energy on speculative scientific or philosophical thinking, his mental processes were incessantly active on his own peculiar business. One who had observed him closely and carefully states this with vigor and force: 'The universal testimony of those who know him is that he is always thinking. Not mind-wandering, casual consciousness, but hard, disciplined, purposeful thinking upon his problems. He is, they say, forever thinking ahead. That is why he is never hurried, never caught off his guard, never excited when the moment for decision and action comes.'[4] Obviously this constant mental

activity is in no way incompatible with difficulty and slowness of thought, rather it may well be a result of such conditions. But it is an undeniable characteristic of Coolidge the politician. When any situation is brought before him, he works it out to the very bottom, so far as his comprehension goes, and with a minuteness of small detail sometimes astonishing to those who know both him and the subject best.

On the other hand, though Coolidge's political thinking is intense and continuous, when it comes to a question of the abstract quality of that thinking, the verdict will be somewhat different. In his early days as legislator he seems to have been attracted by various reforming tendencies, but as time went on, he settled more and more into a conservative attitude and became above all the proclaimer of the necessity and desirability of keeping things as they are. His political philosophy grew to be that of the mid-nineteenth century, the optimistic ideal of democracy as the final solution of all problems and cure for all evils. If a few small evils happened not to be cured, you must shut your eyes for the time and trust in Providence. The comfortable creed of a hundred years ago, that if all mankind had the vote, all mankind would be happy, reaches its acme of positive declaration in Calvin Coolidge: 'For all changes which they may desire, for all grievances which they may suffer, the ballot box furnishes a complete method and remedy.' [5] There may be still something to be urged

for this theory, but it can hardly be said to denote advanced thinking from the twentieth century point of view. It can hardly be said that Coolidge has much to do with the twentieth century.

What is interesting about Coolidge's political ideas is not only the ideas themselves, but his gift of expressing them, which is said to be one of the few things on which he prides himself. Mr. Charles Willis Thompson's interesting chapter on Coolidge as a writer is perhaps a trifle over-enthusiastic, but there is no doubt but that he has a singularly felicitous faculty of coining brief, telling, energetic phrases that take hold of men's minds and stay in them. The sentence addressed to Gompers after the Police Strike, 'There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, any time,' will not soon fade out of American history. There are plenty of others almost equally notable, like the injunction to Massachusetts Senators to be brief above all things, or the incisive comment to the Senate of the United States: 'I do not propose to sacrifice any innocent man for my own welfare, nor do I propose to retain in office any unfit man for my own welfare.' [6] Such things are not only effective phrases, they bear the impress of honest, square thinking. And the recent daily newspaper deliverances of the ex-President, though often commonplace enough, have the same stamp.

After which, it must be admitted that, for a man who professes reticence, Coolidge has produced pages upon pages of dull print which cannot be very

profitable to any one, limp platitudes and trite disquisitions on worn-out themes. It is the trade of politicians and all politicians do it. When you have been bored by it so long as I have, you get to make some allowances. Oh, the infinite weariness with which one turns over Richardson's 'Messages of the Presidents.' No doubt a presidential message must be dull and Coolidge's are no duller than others. But I have sometimes wondered what sort of message Bernard Shaw would write, or Anatole France. No doubt they would smile at the very idea of attempting such a thing, but if they did attempt it, it would be sure to have a flavor.

III

Whether it was his thoughts that did it, or his words, there can be no doubt about the extraordinary, steady, unbroken rapidity of Coolidge's political progress. He once lost a contest for School Committee. Otherwise the voters have given him whatever he asked for, and almost without his asking. Beginning with minor municipal offices in Northampton, he drifted into the State legislature, as it seemed, a hopelessly rural specimen. But he made his way, just by sheer faithful work. He went back to be Mayor of Northampton. Then he went to the State Senate, became its president, slipped into the Lieutenant-Governorship. A little later, as Governor, the Police Strike gave him nation-wide prominence. His supporters urged him for the Presidency in 1920, but the Senatorial

clique put in Harding instead, and it was left for an unexpected reaction of accident and weariness to land the Massachusetts man in the Vice-Presidency. Two years later Harding's death advanced his associate to the highest office in the country. People smiled, and said, 'That man — President? Not for more than two years at any rate.' At the end of the two years an overwhelming vote gave him the office again, and it seems highly probable that he might have had it a third time, if he had so wished.

It is an interesting point, how much of definite planning, of long ambition, went into the shaping and carrying-out of this career. Coolidge's ardent admirers of course insist, as always, that he had no personal ambition, but was moved solely by the desire to do his duty and be useful. There are occasional contradictions to this view, as the comment of Mark Sullivan: 'You can picture Coolidge as a man who has come to the presidency of a corporation or an institution by starting in as an office boy — but an office boy with his eye fixed, from the very first day, on the big mahogany desk of the president with the definite intention of going upward step by step.'[7] But generally speaking even close observers do not seem to detect anything but an attentive and watchful consideration of whatever opportunity might throw in his way and a most zealous and industrious habit of profiting by it.

Nor is Coolidge himself any more ready to admit

long ambition than are his admirers to admit it for him. The definite and repeated refusals to neglect any immediate duty for the sake of future advancement may of course be easily reconciled with ambition and may even be regarded as a far-sighted and most politic manifestation of it. But constant references in talk, in his speeches, and in his autobiographical writing seem to indicate that Coolidge never looked forward very elaborately to a cloudy ultimate goal of his career, but took each step as it came, and was long inclined to bound his hopes with rather narrow possibilities, political, or even almost locally legal. It might very well be said of him, as of the distinguished statesman in the French comedy, 'It is by never perceiving myself whither I was going that I have arrived at the leadership of others.' [8]

In this point of view it is exceedingly interesting to compare Coolidge's career with some of the great tragedies of American ambition. From him there comes nothing like the passionate outburst of Daniel Webster to his friend Plumer: 'He broke out into the most passionate aspirations after glory. Without it life, he said, was not worth possessing. The petty struggles of the day were without interest to him, except as they might furnish the opportunity for doing or saying something which would be remembered in after time.... "I have done absolutely nothing. At thirty Alexander had conquered the world; and I am forty."' [9] Webster, Clay, Blaine, not to speak of others, toiled and struggled

and suffered and hoped and despaired, to get the presidency of the United States, and never got it. Calvin Coolidge, as it seemed, drifted right along, from the bottom to the top, without any struggle at all.

And when he had got to the top, how much did he enjoy it? There are signs, little indications and gleams, scattered everywhere, for those who know how to read, showing that he fully appreciated the dignity and the grandeur and the far-reaching power of his office. There are shy and subtle touches, as in his speech to the Boy Scouts: 'I am thrilled at the thought of my audience to-night, for I never address boys without thinking among them may be a boy who will sit in the White House.' [10] Yet, along with the sense of greatness, there was always the sense of the burden and the responsibility: 'It costs a great deal to be President.'

The truth is, it was not in his temperament to enjoy glory or anything else. That temperament was the inherited, cumulative, aggravated temperament of New England, in which the sense of duty is the over-riding force and an uneasy conscience suggests that we are not in this world mainly to have a good time, or even to have a good time at all, but for some higher purpose. Always there is that New England face, with all its subtle implications, and the face seems peculiarly out of keeping with merry-making or any of the riot of set publicity, most of all with the ludicrously inappropriate decorations which were resorted to in Coolidge's Western sur-

roundings. There is the garish cowboy rig, and in the midst of it the chilly Vermont countenance, wondering painfully and wearily what it was all about. These people were not working: why should anybody want to do anything but work?

IV

He never did, and here is the secret of his whole existence: work, unceasing, unresting, perpetual work, not so much for what was actually accomplished, but for the habit of work itself. As he puts it: 'On a little church high on a Vermont hillside I saw this inscription: "No man who lives a life of ease leaves a name worth remembering." Industry pays because it is right.' [11] What a complicated network of motives the last sentence implies! In all accounts of him this habit of work is emphasized, from boyhood up. In his father's reminiscences of him it is work, always work. Calvin was a good boy. If you set him a task, you could be sure that it would be finished and finished rightly. He liked to work, apparently he never liked to do anything else. If a visitor came to the house, she might be awakened in the middle of the night: it was Calvin who had forgotten to fill the woodbox and was attending to it.[12]

Undeniably the insistence on such very virtuous habits of industry grows wearisome, not to say even Weemsish, and one begins to speculate as to whether Coolidge was really such a hopeless prig as the Father of his Country was represented to our youth. The few stories of boyish pranks which re-

lieve this strain, the theft of the cannon from an opposing local faction, the introduction of a donkey into forbidden precincts, are refreshing and comforting. But there is precious little of this sort of thing. The sports and amusements of boys seem to have had small appeal for the incipient Puritan, and the sports of men had even less. He did like the circus and still does. But his father said of him as a child, that he did not care for play, and he himself repeatedly admits the same thing with perfect frankness. If in later years he has taken to fishing, it would seem to be more for the gesture than for the pleasure. Certainly there is none of the passion that Grover Cleveland threw into it. One of his biographers excellently sums up his whole attitude towards sport: 'The true explanation of his abstention from athletics lies, however, in other than physical reasons. His mind as a boy — as his mind now is — was essentially and uncompromisingly practical.... It may be ventured as a statement of truth, that there is nothing in the psychology of sport which is within the comprehension of Calvin Coolidge. He had no hostility toward athletics and no disapproval of them: they simply did not interest him.' [13]

Nor does it appear that artistic, æsthetic interests and distractions have much more allurement for Coolidge than social pursuits and amusements. In his speeches he sometimes refers to the artistic graces and charms of life, but the reference is so obviously perfunctory that it is almost painful. There is no evidence that music has ever stirred or

stimulated him, unless that he used to play the bones in a minstrel show. The theatre seems to be null. Painting does not count for much more, though there is one curious discussion of it which we will consider in a moment. Coolidge's admirers enlarge upon his love for nature. Unquestionably both the grim and the gracious aspects of the Vermont woodland landscape impressed their influence on that solitary and introverted boyhood, but the nature passages in Coolidge's writings seem to me thoroughly artificial and superficial, the utterance of a man who is trying to say what he ought to feel rather than what he actually felt. It is said that though Coolidge is a great walker, he never likes to walk alone, observes, with a curious touch, that walking alone gives him a feeling which he refers to as 'a sort of naked feeling.' [14] The real lover of nature, like any other lover, wants to be alone with the object of his affections.

Again, with poetry, Coolidge tells us, and others tell us, that at times he has read a good deal of it. But the reading appears to have been largely confined to Milton, Gray, and above all Longfellow and Whittier. In other words, the appreciation of the poets is mainly intellectual and moral. And the same is true of the discussion of painting referred to above. When the journalist, Beverley Nichols, tried to get an interview from the President, he did not succeed in starting him till modern painting was introduced. Then Coolidge gave his opinions on an exhibition at Pittsburgh and gave them with notable

clarity and originality: 'As I looked at those pictures, I felt that I could see through them, into the minds of the nations which had created them. I could see the torment out of which they had been born. If the nation's psychology was still diseased, so was its art. The traces of the neurosis were unmistakable. If, on the other hand, the nation was on the road to recovery, if its people were rediscovering the happiness which they had lost, the story was told in the picture too.... The only respect in which I would differ from you is that I observed as much evidence of recovery as of sickness.' [15] Here again, you see, the emphasis is on the moral element of art rather than on the sensuous and imaginative.

So, when we dissect and analyze Coolidge's intellectual and spiritual life, we find the residuum to be simply an appalling, enthralling habit of work. The curious thing is that he does not seem really to enjoy even work. There are immense workers in whom the pure love of their occupation is so engrossing that it fills all their waking hours and makes every distraction seem dull and unprofitable merely by comparison. There is no hint of this state of mind in Coolidge. He works because he always has worked, because his father and his grandfather worked before him and the instinct is in his blood, he works because he cannot help it. As one good observer put it: 'He does not indulge in any drivel about the love of work. Indeed he goes some way toward confirming the belief that the real work of the world is done by persons who want to

get through and rest.' [16] It recalls the remark which has recently been attributed to Miss Fanny Hurst in regard to her literary pursuits: 'It is not that I am happy when I am writing, it is only that I am unhappy when I am not writing.'

However this may be, it may safely be affirmed that the essence and the explanation of Calvin Coolidge is the rooted, dominating habit of unceasing, unquestioning, orderly, systematic labor.

V

The order and the system are just as marked in private life and domestic affairs as in public. The President kept a clean desk, but so did the Northampton lawyer, and the desk at home is just as clear. This is accomplished largely by an orderly and systematic arrangement of time. Every minute of White House time is naturally provided for, but here again the habit is constitutional and has always prevailed. As a careful recorder puts it: 'The President practices the most profound reverence for the value of *time* that I have ever heard of.... His visitors waste little of his time. *Per contra*, he wastes none of his own by needless speech. The result is, he has nearly all his time to himself.' [17]

The same careful system is applied to matters of health, with excellent results, and again to matters of dress, which Coolidge observes with much attention, not only his own but his wife's and that of men and women in general. Coolidge knows just what he wants to wear at each particular time and

if by any chance he fails to find it, there is trouble. One of the few recorded instances of his loss of temper is in regard to a mislaid overcoat,[18] and such slight losses seem to come more from infractions of order than from anything else. But, as one who knows him intimately remarked, you come to allow for these things when you understand the system of 'bitter self-control' under which the man always and habitually lives. 'Bitter self-control!' Is it possible to sum up New England better than that?

Nothing shows the habits of order more effectively than Coolidge's dealing with money. It goes without saying that his temperament and his stern New England training gave him a caution and prudence in such matters which no opportunity and no abundance have ever shaken, just as they gave him an immense respect for property and accumulated wealth as the insignia of good standing and the firm anchor of the stability of life. This caution and respect have nothing to do with niggardliness or meanness. There is a perfect readiness to spend when there is a real object in spending. It is recorded of Coolidge that as a young man he joined an excursion party of some kind, taking a girl with him, and it was he who set the pace in liberality of all sorts. Here was manifestly something to be gained by every penny spent. But the waste of pennies he could never get used to, never has. He has the only kind of thrift that really counts, the thrift that is an instinctive habit.

And it is hardly necessary to say that such an in-

stinctive habit is of the utmost value to a great public official in every way. It was carried into the practical administration of the finances, and its value here is obvious and demonstrable, however judgments may sometimes differ about the application. But the habit was even more valuable as an example to the American people in the huge orgy of regardless extravagance which the twentieth century in general initiated and which was so immensely augmented by the effects of the Great War. Here was a man who actually looked at a dollar before he threw it away, who actually hesitated to buy any luxury that was offered to him, merely because he did not know how he was going to pay for it. It was inconceivable, it was unbelievable. Yet this man had passed from nothing to the White House, and there might be good in his ideas after all.

While underneath you must always recognize the sense of something greater than money which prompted Coolidge to refuse a large salary in business rather than give up his political career and also the strong, genuine vein of humanity which prompted his fine saying, 'I favor the policy of economy, not because I wish to save money, but because I wish to save people.'[19] The humanity seems to be always working, constantly though covertly, in the money dealings, as in other things. He was ready to pinch himself. He had no inclination to pinch others. In his law business he toiled hard for his clients without much considering whether they could pay. When he was a legislator,

his colleagues could get nothing out of him in words. Then they were often astonished to find that he had worked for their advantage when they were least aware of it. He kept up a quiet interest in the home people when he was away from them. One who had many letters from him says: 'There isn't a letter in there that isn't packed with kindness, thoughtfulness, with messages to the home folks and with numerous reminders of his strong affection for the people of these hills themselves.... Nobody could read these letters and think Calvin Coolidge a cold man.'

The curious mixture of native tenderness and 'bitter self-control' hardened into a habit shows most intimately in the domestic relations and most of all in Coolidge's relation to his father. They loved each other, they trusted each other, they admired each other. They expressed these things by little more than the 'ugh! ugh!' of the Indian or the New Englander. On the other hand, when Coolidge comes to write of his mother, whom he lost so early, the habit of restraint makes the expression difficult and artificial, so that one quite understands the happy if harsh phrase of one of his critics who speaks of his 'congealed sentimentality.' When New England attempts sentiment at all, it is apt to be of the congealed order. With his stepmother, with whom his relations were purely practical if at the same time profoundly affectionate, it is quite different. It was not a question of words, but of actions, and his conduct towards her was admira-

ble throughout. So in the minor domestic matters. The staff at the White House liked and respected him, even if they did not feel at ease with him, because he treated them as human beings. He treated animals like human beings, also, and his affection, his consideration, his thoughtfulness, for his dogs and cats and all other live creatures affords the usual sure evidence of a fundamentally sympathetic heart.

The mixture of tenderness with an innate dread of showing it is naturally most of all manifest in the most intimate family connections. It is impossible to imagine Coolidge lavishing demonstrative affection upon his children. The story told by Mrs. Coolidge [20] of his rebuking one of the boys who proposed neglecting to dress for dinner is curiously suggestive of habitual New England discipline. Yet it is clear enough that father and sons always loved, trusted, and understood each other, and when the younger boy, Calvin, was dying, it was his profound confidence in his father that kept him alive after all hope was gone.

But when you have made long and careful study of statesmen's wives, nothing can be more curious than the analysis of the relation between Calvin and Grace Coolidge. There is the intimate play of tender irony, which is one of the abiding charms of conjugal existence. If a reporter asks Mrs. Coolidge for some account of the romance of her marriage, she answers, 'Do you know my husband?' If she buys a medical book surreptitiously of an agent and

leaves it about the house, not venturing to mention her soft-heartedness, she finds written in it, 'I see here no remedy for suckers.' But underneath the surface playfulness there is the closest mutual understanding and the most perfect and most enduring interdependence. In this particular matrimonial example there is an extraordinary fulness of complementary quality, which again each perfectly understands and appreciates. Mrs. Coolidge likes, revels in the social world, which her husband detests and avoids. He hates to talk, she loves it, and when she utters the superfluous she gives it a grace and charm which make it seem more indispensable than the necessary, as indeed no doubt it is.

When you follow the whole of Coolidge's career, you cannot help feeling how invaluable that wife must have been at every step. Nor is this in any way discounted by Mrs. Coolidge's own insistence that she never interfered in political matters. In some notable instances she professes to have been wholly without even such information as was supplied to comparative outsiders. All the same, you feel that she was at the heart of the whole movement of Coolidge's life, as was the case with the first Mrs. Woodrow Wilson and a hundred others whom you could name. The man would not have been what he was without the woman, and most of all precisely because of her infinite, exquisite tact in effacing herself.

VI

The interesting thing about Coolidge in his larger human relations is the strange combination of remoteness, aloofness, reserve, with such vast contact with men and women of all sorts and even the apparent need of such contact.

As to the remoteness there can be no question: it hits you in the face everywhere. The man was by nature evasive, elusive, shy. In his boyhood he kept by himself, accepted others when he had to, but did not seek them. A well-known confession of his youth appears in a dozen more or less varying forms: 'It's always hard for me to meet people. As a boy I would shrink with fear if I heard strange voices in the home, and would sneak up the back stairs rather than meet them — I simply can't get used to it.' [21] Thousands of New Englanders — and human beings — are made like that, but they do not usually work their way into the White House.

The evidence of others as to the reserve abundantly bears out Coolidge's own. 'The fact is,' said Judge Field, 'that Calvin is shy. He dislikes the limelight. He hates to have his picture taken. He is an extraordinarily shy man and always was. The only thing that overcomes his shyness is his work.' [22] And the general spiritual attitude is summed up in the comment of one who knew him well: 'He is the loneliest man upon earth.' [23]

The acme, the climax, of Coolidge's remoteness and reserve, of his a-social quality, is indisputably his utter disregard of conversation as mankind in

general practice it. There are men who cannot talk even when they wish to. Coolidge can talk freely enough, but talk for talk's sake means nothing to him. If he wants to get information, he will pelt you, storm you with a string of questions for half an hour on end. Then he has done with you and you may go. The ordinary small-talk of the world, its trivial gossip, drifts by him, slips over him, like the idle wind. He stands silent, apart, absorbed in his thoughts, and wonders how people can chatter so, and why they should.

The most extraordinary, the almost incredible, example of Coolidge's conversational habits is the story told by a competent witness of his sending for a friend, apparently for conference. 'Thinking he was wanted for his counsel, the friend hastened to answer the summons. He was ushered in from the waiting-room. "How d'ye do!" said the President. "Sit down." The friend sat. The President sat — and looked out the window. After fifteen minutes of silence the friend rose to go. "Don't go. Sit down," said the President. After twenty minutes more of silence the friend rose to go. "Don't go. Sit down," said the President. Another twenty minutes of silence. The friend arose: "I guess you didn't want me for anything, so I'll be going." The President's reply was: "Thank you for coming. I wanted to think."' [24] Coolidge is sometimes described as an average man, and so in a sense he is. The average man might like to behave in this fashion, but he rarely does.

The element of humor may be taken as a minor aspect of Coolidge's conversational proclivities. Humor is sometimes denied him. And social laughter, laughter as a mere solvent, lubricant, he does not indulge in, or require. But he has plenty of hard, dry, subtle wit, which may cause laughter in others, and innumerable instances of it are cited, perhaps the most effective being the quiet reply, as President of the Massachusetts Senate, to the excited Senator who complained of having been told in debate to go to hell: 'I have read the statutes on the subject carefully and you don't have to go.' There are even times when the sense of fun relaxes into the love of nonsense, as in the scene of the President, while shaving, turning his half-lathered face to recite 'Little Jack Horner' to the bewildered Filipino butler.[25] But perhaps the best comment of all on the subject is Coolidge's plaintive remark, 'Whenever I do indulge my sense of humor, it always gets me into trouble.'

With these general social characteristics it is hardly to be expected that the loneliest man on earth should have many intimate friends. Evidently he has not, but those he has he clings to, as in the same way it is said that when he gets a grudge or a prejudice, he rarely gets over it. The humble friends of his youth, like the Northampton cobbler, Lucey, remain his friends through everything. Perhaps it is better not to have it said of you at last that you pick up endless acquaintances and throw them off when you have no more need of them,

but, rather that you 'practically never lose a friend.' [26]

Another phase of the human relations is the question, how far the influence of others has figured and made itself felt in Coolidge's life and character. Evidently some human contacts affected him profoundly, especially in early life. His father's influence and example went deep. The teaching of the Amherst professors, notably Garman in philosophy, on which Coolidge himself enlarges so much took a solid and enduring hold. But of influence in the sense of producing immediate result there seems to have been remarkably little, early or late. Coolidge listened to what everybody had to say, and then took his own course. Above all, no human being could ever boast that he was the President's accredited adviser or that a special line of action was suggested or initiated by him.

An equal curiosity attaches to the point of Coolidge's influence over others, doubly curious because it seems as if he were the last man who would have anything of the sort. There was never what is called magnetism about him, the enthralling personal hold of a Blaine or a Roosevelt. There was nothing of the cordial, back-slapping, drink-partaking politician, nothing whatever. Yet somehow he got the votes, somehow he got and held the confidence of the vast majority of the American people.

This was partly owing to his immense quiet observation of men, both individually and in masses. He saw everything and he remembered everything,

at any rate everything that would serve his purpose. His judgment of men and their actions was not infallible, but it was keen, and it was always working. And on this judgment was founded an extraordinary political tact and skill. He knew what to say and do and just when to say it and do it. To be sure, he was cautious and deliberate in such action, and sometimes the extremity of caution exposed him to severe criticism, as with his apparent delay in the Police Strike, and again in getting rid of the dubious relics of the Harding Administration, and yet again as to the nomination in 1928. But even here good observers insist that the wisdom of his course was repeatedly justified by the event.

Finally, there is the question of how much Coolidge has really achieved politically. It must be admitted that he is not a great creative, constructive executive. He himself is said to have remarked, in 1928, that it was now time for constructive statesmanship and that his own service had not been of this order and probably could not be. As I have indicated earlier, before the burden of direct governing had been laid upon him, he showed a good deal of interest in progressive, and for those days radical projects, and took hold of such things with the zeal and thoroughness that marked him in everything, so that he gained enduring credit with even labor leaders and radicals for fairness and honesty, as in the settlement of the Lawrence strike. When he went into executive office, he became

more and more impressed with the immense importance of administration and declared that it was imperative to give it a chance to catch up with legislation. And this idea seems to have possessed him more and more.

Is it not, after all, a wise idea and a fruitful? Is not the failure in administration more than anything else responsible for the growing distrust of democracy everywhere? A hundred years ago it was assumed that the ballot would make over the world. The world has the ballot, and it needs making over more than ever. You have not only got to have the ballot, you have got to have some means of giving the will of the majority governmental effect, that is, you have got to have efficient administration. It is precisely the lack of this which has made Parliamentarism a laughing-stock. It is the lack of efficient administration that brought Russia to the despotic benevolence of Lenin and Italy to the benevolent despotism of Mussolini. In view of these things, perhaps, as time goes on, the teachings and the methods of Calvin Coolidge may not prove so futile after all.

VII

There has been endless speculation as to the causes of Coolidge's success. The astonishing contrast between the homely simplicity of the man and the swiftness and smoothness of his political progress makes such speculation inevitable. But his case is only a critical instance of the puzzles

that attend practical success and above all political success in general. Why is it that again and again we see brains, power, natural gifts, and even genius, apparently slighted, disregarded, and pushed into a corner, while complacent mediocrity makes its way to the top almost without effort? Sometimes it seems as if leaders succeeded quite as much by what they have not as by what they have and one may meditate long and deeply on Dr. Johnson's remark, that 'men please more upon the whole by negative qualities than by positive.' The more one studies Coolidge, however, the more one comes to feel the truth of the excellent prize editorial by Mr. Frank W. Buxton on 'What Made Calvin Coolidge,' to the effect that while many interesting persons and many strange chances may have had a hand in Coolidge's advancement, the main figure in that advancement was Calvin Coolidge himself.

And here certainly it is obvious that negative qualities entered in to a considerable extent. The power of keeping still was an immense asset from the beginning. So many promising careers have been shaken, if not ruined by an ill-considered and hasty word. Coolidge allowed no such words to escape from him at any time. And if there was not a lack of sensitiveness, there was at least an admirable gift of concealing it. If blows and thrusts and knocks hurt you too much, leave you raw and sore and irritated, you cannot make your way with men. You have got to stand such things,

and slight them, and forget them. Calvin Coolidge could do it. The very limitation of view is a benefit. It hurts a politician to see too much and too far, impairs his power of rapid and sure decision. To drive the car of state securely it is better to see only the obstacles immediately in front of you and let the distant ones go till you reach them.

And Coolidge's positive qualities tell as much as the negative, and more. The steady, unfailing, unbroken industry counts in the end as much as any other one thing. When others are trifling, dawdling, laughing, or sleeping, you are working, always working, and work above everything else is the thing that makes the world go on. No human being ever worked more assiduously than Calvin Coolidge. Also, there is obscure, underlying, unshaken confidence in yourself and your own power of getting there. This does not imply in Coolidge the least undue self-assertion or egotism. It is compatible with an entire, sometimes almost excessive modesty. Yet under the modesty there is an instinctive trust in the force of your own persistent will, which, just because it is instinctive, impresses itself upon others and hypnotizes them into the belief that your clear, narrow vision of what you want and your dogged, obstinate purpose to obtain it will bring it to you in the end.

But most of all what has made Calvin Coolidge is the fact that he is an average man appealing to average men. Obviously Coolidge has a gift for getting ahead in the world that the average man

has not. But his antecedents, his surroundings, his tastes, his habits are those of the average middle-class American. As another specimen of average humanity, Madame de Maintenon, who was much like Calvin Coolidge, expressed it, 'I am not great, I am only elevated.' Now the average man has the votes, and if you win him, the votes will come to you. Perhaps the best way to win him is to make him feel that you are altogether different, but assuredly the next best is to make him feel that you are exactly the same. The common people early came to see in Coolidge one of themselves. They saw a man with their traits, their habits, their interests, their social surroundings, and this man kept all these things unaltered in his steady progress from the bottom to the top. Observing this, the average man said, 'Here is one just like me, who has made his way to the White House. It is immensely agreeable, flattering, encouraging: let us keep him there.'

Moreover, as has been aptly suggested, the average American saw in Coolidge just the virtues that were supposed to constitute the American ideal and supposed to have made America. Coolidge incarnated thrift, self-denial, plain and simple living, straightforward, hard-headed honesty. The average American had heard that his fathers had these virtues and had made a great nation by means of them. He saw with a sigh that even when he practiced them himself, he had little taste for them, and that his children had much less taste than he; but

there was all the more reason why he should turn to a President who embodied them completely.

In Heine's study of Shakespeare's Cleopatra there is a brilliant portrayal of the contrast between the dark, solemn, austere, mysterious, dreary land of Egypt and the gay, frivolous, trifling Parisian harlot who ruled over it. It would be possible to make an equally effective contrast between the mad, hurrying, chattering, extravagant, self-indulgent harlotry of twentieth-century America and the grave, silent, stern, narrow, uncomprehending New England Puritanism of Calvin Coolidge. And Heine caps his climax with the exquisite comment, *Wie witzig ist Gott!*

VIII

Not the least interesting question that arises in connection with this long and complicated career is the question, just how far Coolidge analyzes and understands himself. There may of course be depths of self-interrogation and self-study which are not apparent, but such depths are not indicated or even suggested in any written or reported words that have come under my eye. Certainly any one who hopes to find them in the Autobiography written at the instance of the popular magazines will be woefully disappointed, for a more unrevealing document has rarely been produced with any such pretension. Nine tenths of it is a rehearsal of surface facts easily accessible elsewhere and the remainder instead of being an honest search into the man's

own character and motives is merely an effort to portray such a boyhood and manhood as a future president ought to be expected to have. The whole story is in the main a compound of superficial, trivial narrative and the congealed sentimentality already suggested. Every word of it shows the deadly commercial influence of the cheap popular magazine, and the only question is, whether the writer is trying desperately to write down to that level or whether the level is one that comes natural to him, either alternative being sufficiently unpleasant.

I find little evidence in Coolidge anywhere of an abstract general interest in the analysis of human motives. Now and then there is an interesting and suggestive touch, as in the remark in the Autobiography, 'In public life it is sometimes necessary in order to appear really natural to be actually artificial,' or the still more striking comment on the political mind: 'It is a strange mixture, vanity and timidity, of an obsequious attitude at one time and a delusion of grandeur at another time, of the most selfish preferment combined with the most self-sacrificing patriotism. The political mind is the product of men in public life who have been twice spoiled. They have been spoiled with praise and they have been spoiled with abuse. With them nothing is natural, everything is artificial.' But usually the emphasis is placed rather upon action than upon motive, and the undeniably acute judgment of men seems to be more a matter of instinct

than of elaborate analysis: perhaps it is all the more practically valuable on that account.

So, it is not to be expected that one who does not analyze others should analyze himself, and such analysis seems to be conspicuously lacking in Coolidge. We have already seen his attitude toward his own ambition. If he has been actuated by long dreams and vast desires and purposes, he is not himself aware of it, or in such comment as he does make disclaims it industriously. There is no clear attempt to analyze his own abilities, or the nature, or the working of them. There is an apparently genuine modesty in regard to them, and especially a naïve astonishment that he could have got so far with any powers that he knows of: that is all. On the other hand, there is no particular consciousness of weakness or defect. I have referred to the admission of a lack of constructive statesmanship, but neither in regard to this nor to any other insufficiency does there seem to be any marked appreciation of being inadequate to any office that may come to him. Fate or some higher power has put him in these places: it is the affair of the same power to see that he is equal to them. And a similar complacency shows in his curious, at any rate apparent, indifference to criticism. Every president is abused with a variety and virulence of savage attack which it would seem as if no sensitive spirit could endure, and even some very tough spirits have shriveled and withered under it. It appears to have little effect on Calvin Coolidge. He is doing

his best, and no man can do more: why should he care?

In short, the sense of occasional failure, of discouragement, of disappointment, which inevitably comes with imaginative obsession by a high ideal, seems to be altogether absent from Coolidge's make-up. The highs and lows of life are taken as they come, without disturbance of sleep or digestion. There is not one trace or hint of that fascinating, inexplicable, haunting melancholy which makes the distinction of Abraham Lincoln, though Coolidge and Lincoln have been often compared. In one of the most striking passages of Renan's history he cuts down to the root of such melancholy: 'A trait which characterizes great men of European stock,' he says, 'is that at moments they become followers of Epicurus, they are overcome with dissatisfaction and disgust when they are toiling with the utmost ardor, and after they have succeeded they doubt whether the cause they have labored for was worth so many sacrifices.' [27] There is nothing of this vague depression in Coolidge, nothing of such spiritual reaction and recoil. Instead, there is a persistent, insistent, certainly not buoyant, but aggressive and almost tediously reiterated optimism, which seems partly physical in its nature, and which always suggests a more or less conventional and traditional habit and attitude of mind.

We have already observed such a conventional attitude in Coolidge's political thinking. It is even more marked and obvious in his thinking on re-

ligious matters. And his preoccupation with such matters is everywhere prominent. Turn over his writings and speeches, and on page after page you will come across religious allusions of some kind. America is under the special protection of divine power. Democracy is divinely ordained for the salvation of mankind and all the forces of the universe are working with it. Perhaps no passage better sums up the whole attitude than a paragraph from the Boy Scout Address: 'It is hard to see how a great man can be an atheist.... We need to feel that behind us is intelligence and love. Doubters do not achieve; skeptics do not contribute; cynics do not create. Faith is the great motive power, and no man realizes his full possibilities unless he has the deep conviction that life is eternally important, and that his work, well done, is a part of an unending plan.' [28]

It is impossible to question the absolute sincerity and profound conviction of this religious attitude. It is not only believed but lived, and no man ever carried his convictions into his life with more fervent and reverent piety than Calvin Coolidge. But the attitude is simply that of the Christian, not to say Fundamentalist, orthodoxy of the middle nineteenth century, or earlier. It is the unshaken belief in an anthropomorphic God, who guides the destinies of nations and also the petty affairs of individuals, and to whom it is of real importance what you or I or Calvin Coolidge may do or not do. Back of such a deity is a future, perhaps unending,

existence, in which all the inequalities of this world, riches and poverty, brains and dumbness, will be amply adjusted and compensated, and in which again you, and I, and Calvin Coolidge will richly receive the reward of all our labor and endurance here.

Now this matter of religion, with Calvin Coolidge, is not a side-issue. It is vital. On the theological fabric outlined above hangs the whole scheme and tissue of the Coolidge type of thinking and living, political, social, economic, and moral. But if the theological fabric withers and collapses, what will you do then? Apparently, for Coolidge, it never has collapsed. But for millions of his fellow-Americans there is very little of it left, and in consequence they demand a readjustment of the universe with which Calvin Coolidge can hardly provide them.

NOTES

NOTES

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